

THE
HOLY LIFE
OF
Monsieur DE RENTY,
A LATE
NOBLEMAN
OF
FRANCE,
And sometime
COUNCELLOR
TO
King LEWIS the Thirteenth.

Written in *French* by
John Baptist S. Jure.

And Faithfully translated into *English*,
By E. S. Gent.

London, Printed for *Benj. Tooke*, at the Sign of the
Ship in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1684.

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THE

Publisher to the Reader:

(Christian Reader;

Such nourishment as the reading of vain Romances, or the Lives of Secular Love-Knights (tho' these only fained) supply to the earthly principle in us, our carnal lusts and ambitions, set upon fading glories and beauties; the same do the Histories of Saints, and persons enamoured of Heaven, administer to the other celestial principle in us, the H. Spirit, which (more or less) inhabits in every one, who is, more than in name, Christian: These Books it is that sets us all on fire, and suddenly transform us into the same holy inclinations we read in those Christian Hero's; so much would we love, so much would we do, so much would we suffer; and if I may apply the Apostles words spoken of the Lord, unto his holy Followers, We

A 2

behold-

beholding, as in a glass, the glory of these Saints of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; whilst both the sweet consolations which such have found in Gods service (sweeter than honey, Psal. 19.) allure us to a vertuous Life; and their treading the way before us in the observance of the most difficult precepts of the Gospel, and in the enduring all the hardship (as our experience accounts it) of the Christian warfare, both shews us it faisible what God commands and invites us to follow their conquering travels. Yet notwithstanding the great effects such writings frequently produce, many aspersions and exceptions intervene, which to many Readers render them fruitless; whilst either we question the truth of the Relation (as when the Historian, living some Ages perhaps after such holy men, and no Eye-witnesses of their actions, is supposed to compose his Relations (much what) out of some uncertain traditions and hear-says; or being contemporary with them,

yet

yet such pieces having run thorow the hands of some Ages not so pure, are imagin'd to be corrupted, and many falsities interposed and mingled with truth) Or, allowing the truth thereof, yet, they being the Histories of such as liv'd long ago, in times of a quite different complexion, and in some (as we phansie) more holy Age (when the first fruits of Gods spirit in the early times of the Gospel, were more vigorous, and his favours in cherishing the infancy of Christianity more eminent, and mens piety by mutual examples more inflamed, we think them no pattern for us, born in the worst and prophaneſt times: Or yet further, if they be modern histories of our own days, yet they being ordinarily narrations of persons first Cloistered and Sequestred from the negotiation of secular Affairs, or also of such whom this world forsook before they applied themselves so intensively to the other, in their being born of mean parentage, or too small, or no temporal fortunes, we think them no fit pattern, at least, for our condition of life, when born

to the management of a fair Estate, the support of a Noble Family, and engaged, perhaps also, in the duties of a Conjugal Life.

For these causes (dear Reader) I have employed some spare hours to present thee with the most pious and exemplary Life of one who was no retired nor cloister'd person, but who practised the rules of perfection in a secular and married condition, with the ordinary worldly impediments of Wife, Children, and Estate, dependent on his care, remaining all his days surrounded with the ordinary temptations that such a life affords, without being engaged therewith; walking in the midst of these flames, which set on fire so many hearts, without being singed at all, or touched by them; and holding this pitch that cleaves so fast to others fingers in his hands without being defiled: one who abandoned secular inweiglements, not in the ordinary and easier way by removing his person from them, but only by removing them from his thoughts: of whom I may say, as the Apostle of himself (the words a little inverted) That he

was

was possessing much, and yet as having nothing; well known, and yet as unknown; not using this world, and yet as using it; as living in the world, and yet dying to it; lastly, one who had no advantage for this, of any felicity of times beyond our selves, who tho' for eminency of Christian graces and communication of divine favors, he may seem to contend with the ancient Saints, yet liv'd but the other day, and dyed not nine years ago, April 24. 1649. lived in a neighbour Country, France, and spent a good part of his life in the chief City thereof, Paris, and there no obscure person, but by his birth of a very noble Family (see cap. 1.) and in it the heir to a flourishing estate; and besides this, honour'd with the dignity of being one of the King's Privy-Council; so that all his carriage and actions are easily discoverable, if any thing here should be either feigned or amplified, and the pen-man thereof a religious man of note, is there yet living to bear the shame of publishing such Lies, who divulg'd within some years after his Death, this

Copy of his Life, in the same place where he acted it.

As for his Letters which the Author hath often inserted here, to discover to the world the interior of his Soul (which cannot be known to others, but only from our selves) know, that in most of these his humility (and that upon command) disclosed such things only to his Confessor, and that he only privately whisper'd in his Ear, what is now divulged abroad, that he relates to his spiritual Father with much transport and ravishment (as who can possess such a treasure and say nothing of it) the great power of the present Grace of God in him, much after the same manner, and with the same modesty, as one recover'd of a great Sickness, (for the state of Sin is a great Disease) rejoicingly would tell the Physician of the present good Habit, Temper, and Health of his Body: That his other ways much evidenc'd Sanctity, will sufficiently persuade his veracity in these Relations.

Lastly, That they are not his Letters
entire,

entire, but only some pieces extracted out of them, as best suiting to the Author's purpose: His Letters, doubtless, containing also in them the Confession of his Sins (which in his Confessors absence, he was necessitated to present for some time only by Letter) and many Complaints of his Infirmities and Defects, with consults for a Remedy thereof. But it became not the secrecie of a Confessor, nor the civility of a Friend, to discover all these; nor yet the Readers benefit, to know them: Since the Perfections of our Brethren, set before us, do nourish our Humility, suppress our Pride, and invite our Imitation: But their faults divulged, advance our Self-Conceit, and breed Security: Tho' for this Honourable Person, you may presume no great faults or blemishes could dwell with so great Mortification, so many good Works, such excessive Devotions, and his Exterior Holy Practices, do sufficiently testifie a great purity of mind.

Amongst which Practices, tho' perhaps some things may occur, that to some Readers
may

may give offence (according to mens several Principles and Persuasion in Religion) yet, I thought it better (doing the business only of a Translator) to let them alone; than, by cutting them out, both to give occasion to those who allow such things, to blame the omission; and those who disallow such things, to suspect them to be more, or of worse consequence, than they are: Especially, when these may serve to provoke you, whoever think your selves more enlightned, to a pious jealousy: Whilst you consider that if he arrived to so high Christian Graces and Perfection, supposed by you to be darkned with some Errors, how much you ought sooner to attain the same as enjoying more truth; and so proceed to employ your self, not in scanning and disputing the things here disliked, but in imitating those approved: Lest perhaps Error be said to bring forth more Piety than Truth; and whilst you say you see, your Sin remain to you more unexcuseable,

THE AUTHOR to the READER.

MY dear Reader, I am in a word or two to give you notice of three things, concerning the Contents of this Book. The first is, that whereas Truth is the principal part of History, you may be confident that it is here exactly observed; because whatsoever you shall find here, is almost all of it extracted out of the Originals, and the rest out of Authentick Copies there, where things were attested by such as were Eye witnesses, and persons beyond exception.

The second is, that tho' we often make use of Monsieur *De Renty's* own Letters, as witnesses of what he was, yet ought ye not at all therefore to suspect the truth of what they relate: Because first, his eminent vertue hath rendred him most creditable in every thing he said, tho' it were of himself; besides, these his Letters are for the most part directed to his spiritual Guide, to whom he did with much confidence unboſom the things belonging to his Conſcience, and gave account as he was obliged, of each thing that paſt in the interior of his Soul. And God, who beſt knows to chuſe the fitteſt means to bring his ends about, having deſign'd the publiſhing this Life, whereby to leave to all faithful men a Pattern of a perfect Chriſtian, did ſo diſpoſe of things, that this his Director dwelling for ſeveral Years out of *Paris*, he was obliged to acquaint him by Letters with his
interior

interior dispositions, they becoming by this means, much more perfectly discovered unto us, than any other way they could. And lastly, we are indeed uncapable of knowing any thing of a mans interior, but by his own declaration; and that which we understand in Saints of this nature (which yet makes up the principal of their sanctity) comes by no other way than their discovering and opening it to some one, and he afterward, to the publick: And therefore either Monsieur *de Renty* himself must have manifested the secrets of his heart, and revealed what was hidden in his Soul, or he must have remained for ever lock'd up and unknown to us; although assuredly, neither thus hath all of him been by himself manifested or related.

The third thing is, that being willing to obey the Decree of our Holy Father *Urban* the Eighth, dated the Thirteenth of *March*, 1625. and that other in explanation of the former, dated *June* 5. 1631. where it is ordered, That those that publish the Lives of any Person of great Vertue, do declare and make protestations upon several heads. I therefore protest, that my intent and design in setting forth this Work is, That the matter thereof should be no otherwise understood, then as grounded upon the Testimony and Faith of men, and not upon the Authority of Holy-Church; and that, by the name of Saint, which I several times attribute to Monsieur *Renty*, I mean only that he was endued with vertue far exceeding the common sort, and do use this word only in that sense that *St. Paul* gives it to all the faithful, and not to put him in the number of Saints Canonized, which to do, belongs only to the Holy Sea.

A

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THE
HOLY LIFE

OF
Monsieur DE RENTY, &c.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

Of his Birth, Infancy and Youth.

O great and glorious were the virtues and good deeds of the late deceased Monsieur *de Renty*, that I can begin my discourse no otherwise than by ingenuously confessing my disability to set them out as they deserve; not even so much of them as appeared outwardly to the eyes of men, and much less the inward Treasure that lay hid in his Soul, tho' that be the principal; Yet notwithstanding undertake I must to write something thereof, as not able to deny the requests of many persons of Piety and Quality, who well knowing that I had enjoyed the happiness of his
B acquaintance

acquaintance in a singular manner, for divers years together, even when he was in the very height of the glory of his Vertues; and that so great a Treasure, so much concerning the glory of God and the publick good (as this excellent and perfect Christian life of his was) ought by no means to be buried in Oblivion; did judge me in a sort obliged to prevent so great a damage.

Come we therefore to the business, for the greater Glory of God, who is admirable in his Saints, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who replenished this rare man with his Graces, and abundant communication of his Spirit; and let us do it in the strength of that Divine assistance, which as I stand in very great need of, so I humbly beg it with all my soul.

Monsieur de Renty draws his Original from one of the most Noble Houses of *Artois*, which is that of *Renty*, famous for its Antiquity, for its great Alliances (and in particular, to the House of *Crowy*, whence came the Dukes of *Arfoot*, and Princes of *Smay*) for the Honorable Employment of its Ancestors, and their Noble Acts in Arms and Battels; and above all, for its Piety, a great testimony whereof was left in the year, 1570. by *Wambert*, called the good Count of *Renty*, and *Hamburg* his Lady, who were not contented onely to found and richly endow within their Territories, an *Abbey*, under the name and protection of *St. Denis* (which had the blessing to have a Saint for Abbot; to wit, *St. Bertulphe*) but went on, encreasing more and more (like the Morning light) in vertue and good works, and built besides that, three other Churches, one dedicated to *St. Peter*, another to *St. Martin*, and the third to *St. Wast*.

Monsieur Renty, was the onely Son of *Charles de Renty*,

Renty, and Magdalen of Pothouren, who also descended by her Mother from the same House of Renty. He was born at Renty in low Normandy, in the Diocess of Bayeux, in the year of Grace 1611. having the Poor to present him at the Font, God so ordering it by a particular Providence, that the Poor should be God-fathers to him, who afterwards during his life, should be a Sollicitor, Protector, and Father of the Poor. He was at the Font named Gaston, and at Confirmation, John Baptist, being brought up where he was born, till he was between six or seven years of age, and then by the Lady his Mother, was he brought to Paris, and lived therewith her about two years, till he was put into the Colledge of Navarre, and from thence sent to Caen; to the Colledge of the Jesuit Fathers, having with him for his conduct, a Tutor, being a Church-man, and besides him a Governor, who unhappily prov'd an Huguenote, and might in the sequel, have been notably perjudicial to him in corrupting his faith and manners: But God out of his singular and paternal care of him, as intending to make him one day a great instrument of his glory, and of the salvation of many souls, preserved him from the pernicious intents and endeavours of that dangerous man, and became himself his Governor, which occasioned him since then to say, that God from his infancy had been most gracious to him; and (as David saith of himself) had been his keeper from his mothers womb. As he had naturally a very good wit, piercing reach, and great judgment, so was he very notable and famous for his progress in his studies; from the which, notwithstanding he was taken at the age of seventeen, and put into an Academy (as they call their Schools of Gentle Exercises) at Paris;

where he shewed himself most dextrous and accomplish'd in all the Exercises theretaught: but that which most of all pleased, and, as I may so say, charmed him, was the Mathematicks, which he applyed himself to with such diligence, that he deprived himself of all sorts of diversions (which youth is given to) and therein attained to such proficiency, that he understood them perfectly, and compos'd therein some Books.

But the time being now come, when God was minded to go closer to the work he had in hand, and to dispose this choice soul to the execution of those things, which he was designed for, it pleased him so to order it, that a Stationer, to whom Monsieur de Renty often repaired to buy such Books as he stood in need of (for satisfying the curiosity and ardent desire he had of knowledge in all Sciences, suitable to his condition) did one day present to him, the famous little Book of the *Imitation of Christ*, and desired him to read it; but he having as then, his mind taken up with other notions, made no account of it for that time. The Stationer having brought him another day some Books that he had need of, presented the same again to him, and with some earnestness, besought him to be pleased to read it: thereupon he yielded, and read it, and was thereby so enlightned and touched (as before him, a great multitude of persons of all sorts had been) that entertaining now no other thoughts or affections, he resolv'd to mind seriously his salvation, and give himself up to God; so that amongst the great fruits and signal victories obtained by that book, we may well reckon for one, this work of grace and change, wrought upon Monsieur de Renty, who also from that time forward, had that Book in so great
love

love and esteem, that he always carried it about him, and made use thereof on all occasions.

The gracious effect which the reading of this Book wrought in his soul, was so great, that it bred and enkindled in his heart, the thought and desire to quit the world, to consecrate himself entirely to the service of God, and to make himself a Carthusian, although he could not but see himself, to be an only Son, the Heir of a great Estate, and endowed with qualities and perfections, that did open to him a way to the splendors of the world: And as he was naturally resolute, firm, and constant, succoured by the Divine assistance (to whose will and pleasure, he gave up himself as an absolute Sacrifice) after he had duly examined and ordered his design, he put himself upon the execution, which passed in this manner:

Being one day upon *Nostre-Dame* Bridge, with the Lady his Mother, he desired leave to go forth of the Coach, to buy something, which being granted, he stole presently out of her sight, and slipping with cunning and diligence from street to street, he gets out of *Paris* afoot, in the Month of *December*, the Year 1630, and takes the way to our Lady of *Ardilliers*; and a few days after this escape, advertised his Father thereof by this following Letter:

SIR,
 'Nothing doubt, but this alteration will bring with
 'It is some affliction to you; the first motions of Pas-
 'sion being not in the power of men, and indeed na-
 'ture also inclining us, to bemoan the loss of what she
 'loves: But since that there is something of God in
 'this business, I most humbly beseech you to lay aside
 'all passion out of your soul, and consider that in it
 'which

which is on God's part. Thus it is, Sir, that after I had combated two years with my self, and resisted all the Inspirations that God had given me during that time, I was at last constrained to break off to long a delay in the quitting of the world, avowing, that I have not strength enough to undertake the working out my salvation, in a place, where is practised the contrary to what I would effect: This is too perilous a matter for a feeble person, that hath a desire to march on sure ground; and therefore I have judged, that it would be more to the purpose, to strangle the evil in the birth, than to stay till it become greater and I not able afterwards to master it; For so unlike are the maxims of the world, to those of Jesus Christ, that I cannot at all believe, a soul that fears to offend him, can live long in it, and especially in the Court, but that she shall soon be forced to abandon it, when she shall see herself oblig'd to comply with the corruptions of the time; which would not become me now to talk of, since for a good while ago, my design hath been, rather to hide and bury in oblivion its fooleries, than to recall them into my memory. I am minded therefore to unwind my self out of this Labyrinth, although I know it will be said, that I might well enough enjoy the world, and yet keep my self from its enormities. I confess it, but let a man consider what comes after, a man must resolve then to be the table talk of the Rabble of our Masters of the Mode, that will give out, that one's a Bigot Pecorian, a sour Fellow, not fit for discourse and company, a very burthen to the world, with a thousand such like sayings, whereof I have had already but too much experience. In effect, a pleasant thing it would be, to see a young man of my

my inclinations enter the Court, and there act the Reformado, should you, Sir, but see it, would not you your self, in good truth, be the first to laugh at me for my labour.

I therefore humbly beseech you, to consider what a grief it would be to a Father, to see his Son in the Court and great Meetings, there only to be contemned, and set at nought: not but that for all this, a good Conscience counts it a great honour to suffer all these things for God's sake: But I believe it will make more for your contentment, that I retire my self; for at the Court a man must live as at the Court; and being not able to serve two Masters, I conclude with the Gospel, that he that serveth God, ought to follow and attend on God.

I have always seen this practis'd in the world, that when one hath a quarrel with another, that Man's friend is so far from offering his service to his adversary, that he even shuns his company and conversation; in like manner, God and the world being in terms of hostility, I should believe it a great offence, not to do that for God, which I would be sure to do for a friend, which is but a mortal man: And seeing when we love a thing, we go not about to search out just the contrary to it; so the means to avoid sin, is to fly the occasions of it; and shall it be said, that for so wretched a thing as to make a little shew, and to be talk'd of, a man should endanger the loss of his soul? No, no, and they that think so now, will be of another mind, when they must give an account to God, for what is past; then it will be, that they will know what it is to live well or ill, but then it will be too late; and therefore leaving the dead, to bury their dead, according to

the small illuminations we have, let us labour to reform our life, and to do something for the love of God, who hath told us so expressly, and so often, that we must deny our selves, forsake all and follow him: which thing, I believe, you would not be willing to gainsay.

You are the cause of my demurring and retardment, and since the time of my daily praying for this retirement, I have had many thoughts of your affliction, which yet for all that, will soon be mitigated, when you shall consider, that God doth all for the best, and that it may be, he hath sent you this tribulation to produce out of it some good effects.

I leave this to his secret dispensations, and beseech you to believe, that I am able to serve you, at least, as much in this new Profession, as in that which you had design'd me to, God give me the grace to do it. I acquaint you not yet with the place where I am, fearing least now at first, your passion should cause you to come hither, but within a short time, when I shall know the state of things a little better, I will not fail to give you notice. In the mean while, I shall unceasingly pray him, whom I am resolv'd to serve, to abide with you, and make you know, how passionately I am,

Sir,

Your most humble Son, and
most obedient Servant,

GASTON de RENTY,

Thus you have the Letter he sent to his Father, wherein we may read his Spirit, his Devotion, and the pure and solid Illuminations, that already shone in his Understanding.

His

His Father extremely afflicted at his absence, sends abroad every where to seek him; and God, who gave him this desire, though not to take effect, would so have it, that he was found at *Amboise*, although in disguise, having chang'd a Gold-lac'd Suit, into a poor Man's habit. He was brought back thence to his Father at *Paris*, who thought it not amiss, to carry him along with him to his Castle or Mannor House of *Beny*, where he was put upon exercises suitable to his birth, wherein he gave proof of so much vertue, so much wisdom, and good conduct, that (although but nineteen year old) he was chosen by the Ballywick of *Vire*, to be a Member of the States of *Normandy*, then assembled at *Roan*, (Monsieur de *Langueville* being President) where he spake so pertinently and prudently to business, that the three Estates remained not only satisfied therewith, but even also astonished.

After these exercises of Nobility, he employed himself in the rebuilding of the Church of *Beny*, in such sort as we see it at this day; and being far from such divertisements as are used by Nobles of his age and condition, he rose ordinarily at four a Clock, and then went softly (without waking the Groom of his Chamber) into his Closet, to say his Prayers, and from thence at five a Clock to the Church, and to his building, whence he return'd not till about seven or eight a Clock at night, causing some meat to be brought him thither, and continually busied with the workmen. We cannot doubt, but that such an act of a person of his quality and age, and with such fervor, was most acceptable to God, and acquir'd many great graces; seeing (in order to such) one heroick action doth more prepare a soul, and render it more capable, than a great number of small and common ones.

CHAP. II.

His Marriage, and course of life, to the age of 27 years.

ALTHOUGH the estate of a Religious Life (as faith teacheth, and the Church hath defin'd) is much more perfect than that of Marriage; yet as the perfection of a man, consists not in the estate he hath chosen, but in doing precisely and eminently the Divine will, in what condition soever his providence hath placed him: God, that he might not altogether deprive Monsieur *de Renty* of the glory and merit of a Religious Life, inspir'd him with the will, design and endeavours thereto; but yet having resolv'd to propound him to all married persons within the Church, as a perfect and complete pattern of all virtues, needful to the estate of Wedlock, it pleased him to call him to that condition, of which, he said, he had so much of assurance, that he nothing doubted thereof.

At the age of 22 years, he espoused *Elizabeth de Balsac* of the house of *Entragues*, daughter of Monsieur *de Dunes* Count of *Graville*, a Lady of great virtue, whose modesty hinders me to speak more of her, and will hinder me through the whole course of this History, from giving her, before men, part of that glory, which she hath deserved in many of the good works of her husband; hereby reserving for her, the greater glory before God.

Such Marriages as are made in the fear of God, and
reverence

reverence of the Sacrament, are always watered from Heaven with Spiritual Benedictions, and usually with Temporal also; among which as children are esteem'd the principal, so was their marriage blessed with five, of which four that remain alive (two Sons, and two Daughters) make us hope that they will shew themselves according to their capacities, worthy Inheritors, much more of the vertues of their Father, than of his wealth and possessions.

In this estate he liv'd, till the 27th year of his age, with the modesty, wisdom and conduct, found in virtuous persons of his quality and condition of life, employing himself in pious and laudable exercises, and making of visits abroad, so far as Civility and Decorum required of him; wherein, his great prudence, amiable sweetness, rare modesty, mingled with well-befitting gayety and lightfomness, with gentle and very witty passages of discourse, rendered him very acceptable, yea, and made him to be look'd upon, lov'd, and carossed by the late King Louis the just, even to the raising up against him the envy of some, who, after the narrowly prying into him, could find nothing to object, save only that he was young. But he ever prefer'd before all things, the glory of God, and his own salvation, avoiding with great care, all occasions of sin, and heedfully shunning those Rocks, whereon those of his condition and age do usually split and miscarry, saying the office of our Lady, and sometimes that of the Dead, with other Vocal Prayers, and performing all other things requisite for his Salvation, which is indeed the business, for which God made us, and keeps us here on earth, and notwithstanding all this, which the greatest part of men, have least in their thoughts.

As

As by his birth, he was to wear a Sword; so now (that Nobles and Gentlemen may behold him as a mirror for their Instruction) must we draw him from home, and the exercises of Peace, and look upon him in Arms; and in that War; which (notwithstanding all our prayers for divers years) yet still continues, seeing we daily stir up and blow this fire with our Transgressions.

And first of all for his skill: Monsieur *de Renty* understood perfectly all the parts and functions of the Discipline of War, by reason of his good wit, and particular study therein, which made him admir'd in the Councils of War, and other Meetings, and that by the most ancient and experienced Captains, among whom was the Duke of *Weymar*, who was astonished, that so young a man, with so little experience (as his age could allow him) should be able to speak so knowing in things of such difficulty.

For his Conduct: as God had given him naturally great prudence, and (notwithstanding all his activity) a well settled judgment, so he exercis'd it very well, foreseeing and providing for such things as need required. In the War of *Lorrain*, commanding a party of Horse, of about Sixscore, of whom more than sixty were men of good birth, they arriv'd two hours within night at a Village, where they found the houses all empty; so that being forc'd to quarter each one as he could find, Monsieur *de Renty* met happily by a singular providence of God over him, in his quarters, a poor old Woman, the only creature left in all the Village, as not able to flee away with the rest, being ready to dye with hunger and sickness; he comforted this poor woman, and assisted her in this extremity both for soul and body; insomuch, that being

sensible

sensible of her obligations to him, she enquired of him, whether he was of the Troops of the King, or of the Duke of *Lorrains*: To whom he, out of prudence, gave not a direct answer; but ask'd her, why she made that question? Because, saith she, if you be of the Kings party, you must be gone presently, because the Cravats would come thither infallibly in few hours space, and cut them all in pieces: This advice he communicated to the rest of the Commanders with him, who all of them judg'd it fitting to horse suddenly, and be gone to the body of their Army. The thing proved very true, for three hours after they were gone, the Enemy came on purpose to charge them, which they might have done, without suffering one to escape, by reason of their great number, the time favourable, and themselves fresh, setting upon men harrass'd out, and tired with the pains of a long march. Thus God watcheth over them that fear him, and for their sakes, many others also: This lodging might have saln to the lot of some one less deserving such a favour from God, and that would not have made use of it so prudently.

For execution of business, he was not at all defective therein, having a body strong and robust, a spirit active, generous, and resolute, not fearing any danger.

But for an Additament hereto, as it were the soul to the body, add light to beauty, we find in him the fear of God, Piety, and Uprightness, without which Nobility hath but a false glister, power is destructive, and War brings with it mischiefs horrible, and without number. *Monsieur de Renty* all the time of his being in the Armies, performed constantly his Prayers, and other Exercises of Devotion, when he came to his quarters,

quarters, if there were a Church there: His first care was to visit it, and to do his devoir to our Lord; if there were any Religious House, he took up there his lodging, and (that he might not incommode them) for himself alone, when the Army staid any time in a place, while many, and much elder than he, past away their time in Ganning, Drinking, Rybaldrie, Swearing, and other Disorders, he contain'd himself within the bounds of his usual wisdom, avoiding all these base and vitious actions, and entertaining himself in Exercises of Vertue and Honour.

In every place where he had any power, he wholly employed it to keep off disorders: He forbade peremptorily his men the treating ill of their Hosts that entertain'd them, or giving them occasion of complaint; and he never took horse, but he made come before him, them with whom he quartered, to tell him themselves, if any had done them wrong; and if he found that any of his, had offended, he forthwith saw it remedied, and did them right. One day being mounted, and ready to depart, having made this enquiry of his Hostess, and she complaining, that one of his Servants had stoln a shirt, he caused them all forthwith to come before her, that she might find out the Thief; which being done, and one of them confessing, that he had it upon his back, he incontinently ordered, that he should be stript of it before them all, and it restored to the woman, notwithstanding many persons of quality, thought it very harsh, and opposed the business: But he always kept himself firm to Justice, and said, he would by no means endure any Thieves. If all that have commands, dealt in this sort, as they ought, people would not stand so much in dread of their Souldiers, as of the most cruel of Enemies; and God, who

who is the Lord of Hosts, would afford more blessing and success to their Arms.

But as the passage most dangerous to Nobility of making Shipwrack of their Salvation, is falling out, and Duels, so God was pleased that his Servant should meet with this perilous occasion, to teach all Gentlemen, and those that wear a Sword, how they ought to behave themselves therein. Being in the Army, he he had a falling out with a punctilious Gentleman, which coming to the knowledge of the Chief Officers, he made it appear, that this Gentleman had no reason at all to be agriev'd at him; which thing they judged also to be very true: But the other party, not acquiescing in this determination, appeal'd to that judgment, which according to the unhappy *Maxime* of the World, his Sword, could yield him, and challenged Monsieur de Renty to Duel: who returned this answer to him that brought the challenge, that the Gentleman was in the wrong, and that he had given all satisfaction which in Justice he could desire: But this not contenting this untoward spirit, he persisted in his perilous design, to make him meet with his sword; to which, finding himself much press'd, he made an answer, which is so much the more considerable, in that he was so young, and had not as yet a reputation, but was to get it by Arms: The answer was this, that he was resolv'd not to do it, since God and the King had forbidden; otherwise, he would have him know, that all his satisfactions he had endeavoured to give him, came from no fear of him, but of God, and of his displeasure; and that he would go every day after his wonted manner, whither the necessity of his affairs call'd him; and that if he did assault him, he would make him repent it. This quarrellsome man, seeing he could

could not provoke him to an open Duel, found one day the means to meet him, and so to make him draw his Sword, where, by the just judgment of God, this other came very ill off; for he and his second being hurt, and disarm'd, got nothing for their rashness; but shame and sorrow: But then this true Christian Gentleman, instead of doing them more harm (as he might) lead them to his Tent, caused Wine to be given them, their wounds to be dress'd, and their Swords to be restor'd them. And joyning to Charity and Generosity, both Humility and Modesty, as his greatest ornaments, he kept the thing ever after in secret, never opening his mouth concerning it to any, as some would have done (out of vain-glory) and, which is more to be wondred at, he never afterwards spake word thereof to his man, who was present, and serv'd him for a second in this Assault; to whom also before the deed, when he saw himself forced to a defence, he gave charge by no means to kill.

This was not the onely difference, but he had others also, with some of the Neighbours, or at least good cause to complain of them; to which business, he brought all that Prudence, Patience, and Charity could contribute, and always came off most happily; and he was wont to say to his Domesticks, concerning his own differences, or theirs, that there was more of courage and generosity to bear any injury for the love of God, than to requite it with another; and to suffer, than to revenge, because the thing was far more difficult; that Bulls themselves had courage enugh, but that it was a brutish courage; whereas that of ours, should be reasonable and Christian.

CHAP. III.

His entire change and call to a high Perfection.

MONSIEUR *de Renty* having lived to the age of 27 years, it pleased God to touch him now more closely, to enlighten him more clearly, and to call him to that high perfection, whereunto, by the faithful cooperation which he yielded to this call, we have seen him to arrive; that like a great Torch or Luminary, he hath spread his beams far and wide, to *Paris*, and in all places where he hath been. This came to pass at a Mission made by the Fathers of the Oratory, some six or seven Leagues from *Paris*, whither he went on foot, and where he made a general Confession, with all the care, that those take, who desire to do it exactly. And so great graces did he receive in this new call of his, that he marked this time, as the beginning of his intire Conversion to God, and perfect Consecration to his Service.

In pursuit of this change, as he knew, that what good desire soever one hath to advance towards Perfection, the way that leads thither was hard and full of dangers, and therefore not to stray out of the way, and be lost, of necessity one must have a good guide: so God out of his singular Providence, for his Sanctification, provided him one, and such a one indeed, as his need required; and that was the Reverend Father *de Condrien*, General of the Oratory, a Personage of profound Science, of great Piety, and of high capacity
E for

for matters Interior, who had the conduct of him for some twelve yeares space (to wit, as long as this Father lived) and that with great care, and affection extraordinary, as so excellent a subject deserved; who made, by his means, such a notable progress, that it caused him to say to a certain person, that Monsieur de Remy would one day be a great Saint.

The way he took, in effect was this following; not to speak of his Penances and Austerities (which are the first combats of a person well converted, and call'd to great matters, of which we shall treat hereafter) he withdrew himself altogether from the Court; he bad adieu to all employments of Vanity and Ambition, to be taken up in those entirely, which might glorifie God, and help his Neighbour, he renounced all visits of pure complement, and unprofitable: He set his mind to the exercise of Prayer, and therefore said every day the Great Office, rising even in the night to say Matins, and after, made an hour of Meditation; insomuch that he continued every night two or three hours in prayer, and that in the greatest rigor of winter: Every day he made two examens of his conscience, with an exact search into his smallest faults; one in the morning before dinner, and the other at evening: He confessed twice a week, and communicated three or four times: He went one day in a week to visit and instruct the poor sick people of the great Hospital de Dieu. Another day, those of his own Parish; and a third, the Prisoners; and, in the rest, he used to meet at Assemblies of Piety.

But in regard he had more care and zeal for his Children and Domesticks (as he was oblig'd) and well knew to distinguish Commands from Counsels, and Obligations from Voluntary Devotions, he ordered,
that

that every evening, by the sound of a Bell, they should be assembled, to make together their Examens, to say the Letanies of our Lady, and other Prayers: Every Saturday he made them, in presence of his Lady, a Discourse upon the Gospel of the Sunday following; to imprint in them the Principles and Instructions of matters of their Salvation, from which they reaped much edification and profit.

But that which was highly exemplary, was the order he kept in his journeys; which was thus, There was as much regularity therein, as in a well reformed Religious House: In the morning, before setting out, they heard Mass; as soon as in Coach, and beginning to go, the first thing done, was the saying the *Itinerarium*, which he never omitted, how short soever the journey was he made; next, was the singing of the Letanies of our Lord, then followed some Meditation; after that he said a part of the Divine Office, which being done, he entertained the company with some good discourse, and such as raised them up sweetly to God: Beholding the spacious extent of the Countrey, he would speak of the immensity of God; upon the presenting of any beautiful object to their eyes, as any Summer-house for delight, any Meadow enamell'd with flowers; any River winding pleasantly about the land, he would discourse of the Beauty of God; or of Paradise, forming such acts of vertue upon it, as touch the very heart; approaching near to the place where they were to dine, he made the Examen, and being come thither (as also where he was to lodge at nights as soon as out of Coach, and before he entred the Inn, would he go to the Church, where if the door was shut, and no man found to open it, he knelt down at the door, to render his devoir to the holy

Sacrament; afterward, he enquired if there were any Hospital in the place, to the end he might go thither, and exercise his Charity.

Being in his Inn, the first thing of all he did in his chamber, was to cast himself on his knees, and to worship God, to pray with great affection for all persons that entred that place, and for pardon of all disorders that had been there committed: When he saw any thing written upon the walls or chimney, that offended modesty, he defac'd it, and in place thereof, writ words of Instruction in Piety, and the way to Happiness, and endeavoured always before departure, to give some good advice to the servants of the house, and to such poor of the place as he could meet with, that so by the example of our Lord, he might not pass through any place, without doing some good in it.

After dinner, when up in Coach again, he made some recollection, and applied himself to his Interior, for some little time; then entertained some recreation, which was grave and modest; afterward, with the company, sang the Vespers; which done, he wisht them to refresh themselves a little, and use some innocent divertisement, in which, to render it Christian and Holy, he interwove some touches of Piety: Often he caused them to sing with him the Articles of our belief in French; which to that end, he had caused to be set in Musick: About four a clock, they sung the Compline, afterward he made by himself some mental Prayer, and being come to his Inn, his Exercises were the same with those of the morning; and this was the rule he observed in his journey. If that saying of the Jews be true, that a man may be known, in sickness, at the table, in play, and in a journey, we may easily judge by what hath been said already, how much

much must needs be the vertue of this great servant of God.

As the end of Marriage is to have Children, and of Christian Marriage to render them vertuous, in order to Eternal Happineſs; ſo he took very great care, both by himſelf and others, to make his Children ſuch; and for that end, to engrave deeply in them the fear of God, to diſaffect them from the eſteem of the world, to let them know, that the Maxims of it are much contrary to the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and that true Nobility conſiſts in vertue. Behold here his thoughts of this matter, as he wrote them to a certain Lady.

‘For the education of Infants, God, having diſtinguiſhed their conditions, ſeems to teach us, that there ought to be a difference between the nurture of a Peaſant, and that of a Gentleman, who being born to wear a Sword, muſt not, without doubt, be put into a Cloiſter for the fitting of him to it: but ſo great corruption is now among us, that all the principal Inſtructions that either we, or any we ſet over them, do give them, ſerve for nothing but to kindle a fire infernal of vanity in their hearts, where there is not but too much already, pushing youth on by Paganish examples, to put up and endure nothing, to aſpire always to that which is moſt aloft, and for the climbing up thither, to make uſe of ſuch means as are moſt approved by the world, although they be forbidden by God himſelf.

‘But if they go not thus far; yet at laſt, do they not quite choak in the heart of a young Gentleman all Chriſtian Principles? For example, you know how theſe Duels infect the minds of our youth: Now tell me, how many are there, who would be content, that
C 3 their

their Children being grown up, and challenged, should refuse to fight: and much less would be content, were they sure they should come off without harm, and get the better: but what will this come to at last, that we never make to them any discourse expressly tending to the condemning of Duels, and shewing the mischievous effects of them; which yet we ought to do so much the oftner, and that to the bottom, inasmuch as their inclination, the example, esteem and honour of the world, doth engage and incite them to these quarrels; if perhaps youth let fall any spark of this furious hot coal, which is naturally in us, some one will, it may be, in a kind of smile, and by the by, Oh that's not good! God forbid such a thing: yes, but take notice, I pray you, whether you use no more earnestness than this to prevent your Son's having crooked legs, and a misshapen body; you use no more earnestness than this, to have him well taught to dance and fence. Such were his Sentiments in this matter.

As for his Domesticks and Officers, that he had under him, he recommended to them in a special manner Justice, Charity, and Sweetness, to do good to all, and ill to none, as far as they were able; and to one of them who had been transported with Choler, and committed some excess in a Church-yard, he wrote as followeth:

I have heard with grief, what you have done, and altho' I cannot believe all the Circumstances that are told me, yet I daily meet with enough to make me know that your passion hath got the mastery; if I look'd upon you only for my self, and proper interest, I should desire you might exterminate all those that would wrong me; but so the case stands,

that both you and I must live like Christians, or assuredly be damn'd, if we have not this belief and desire, let's be Turks and Barbarians profess'd. Knew you but how much such actions are displeasing to God, what scandals and damage they bring to men, your heart would be changed forthwith, and God grant it may: my Goods, Blood, and Life, I offer to him, to obtain this Grace, on which depends your Salvation; but I pray you as a Brother, and command you as a Master, to repair the wrong you have done to God, to an Holy Place, and to your Neighbour; I had rather my house were ruin'd (for me) than you should fall again into such an extremity, I must regulate my thoughts and desires of preserving my estate, by my Conscience, and the love of God, who gave it me. I assure you, that our guidance in this world is difficult, considering the wickednesses of the times; and tho' one may sometime hinder the oppressing of the weak, and withstand injustice by courses extraordinary; yet where there is a mixture of our own interest, it behoves us to have recourse to ordinary ways; as first, that of mildness; secondly, that of Justice and Law; and if that prosper not, to employ our patience: Then is the time, that we ought to practise such a virtue; I make no great account of certain Devotions for fashion, but I respect the Maxims of the Gospel, which teach us no other way than this.

CHAP. IV.

§ 1. *His Vertues in general.*

BEFORE I speak of the Vertues of this man of God in particular, I must say something of them in general (as it were the Ground-work) and I have two things to say :

The first, that among all the Persons of Piety that I have known, I have not seen any whose Vertues have been, in my opinion (all things considered) more solid, more strong, and more accomplished, than were his. I speak thus much of him, for that I have been intimately acquainted with him many years, even to his death : so that when I fancy and figure in my mind all the severals of his carriage, both interior and exterior : I cannot but conceive him, as a most eminent Idea and Pattern, and look upon him, as a Model of a Perfection Consummate ; wherein, all they that have had any thing to do with him (who were not a few, by reason of his many employments for the good of his Neighbour) will easily accord with me, and witness assuredly, that I say nothing too much.

The second is, that we cannot better learn what we desire to know of him, than from himself, and that by an account which he gave to his second Director, a Religious of the Society of Jesus, who succeeded the Reverend Father *de Condrien* ; and who had told him, it was necessary for him, to know his dispositions, and the course which he ob-
served.

served. Behold here then what the Original gives us, though some things be left out, because they are set down in the Chapter aforegoing.

‘I have delay’d some days, after the command I had
‘to set down the employing of my time, for the better
‘discovering of some things therein; but I find nothing
‘there of strict order, or which can well be set down
‘in writing, because all consists in a kind of self-aban-
‘doning, and following after the order of God, which
‘causeth in a manner continually diverse things, but
‘all upon the same bottom.

‘For my outward and more Corporeal part of my
‘carriage, I usually rise at five a Clock (we must re-
member what goes before, that this was after he had
spent part of the night in Prayer) ‘at my awakening, I
‘enter upon my bottom of Self-Annihilation, before
‘the Majesty of God; I unite me to his Son, and Spi-
‘rit, to render him my homages: Being risen, I take
‘Holy water, I cast down my self, and adore the
‘blessing of the Incarnation, which gives us access,
‘and reconciles us to God: I deliver up my self to the
‘Holy Infant Jesus, to be entred into his Spirit: I sa-
‘lute sometimes my good Angel, St. John Baptist, St. Te-
‘resa, with some other Saints, and afterward I recite
‘the *Angelus*.

He saith (sometimes) not that he fail’d out of obli-
vion or inconstancy, being extremely exact and faith-
ful in the continuance of his Exercises of Devotion;
but out of the force of an active application, and some-
times passive, that he had to God, which kept him
from any other diversion.

‘I cloath my self, which is soon done, and after
‘pass to the Chappel, through a little Parlour, where
‘over the Chimney, I have set an Image of the
‘Holy

' Holy Virgin, holding her Son, as the Lady of the
 ' House; I kiss the earth before her, and say, (*Mona-*
 ' *stra te esse matrem, &c.*) I devote my self to her service
 ' entirely, with the offering up of my Family, Wife,
 ' Children, Domesticks; and I have practis'd this of-
 ' fering of them to her a long time, that by her means
 ' they all may be perfected for God; and rising up,
 ' I say to her, *Mater incomparabilis ora pro nobis.*

' After that I enter into the Chappel, where I cast my
 ' self down, and adore God, abasing me before him,
 ' and making me the most little, most naked, most
 ' empty of my self, that I can; and I hold me there
 ' by faith, having recourse to his Son, and to his ho-
 ' ly Spirit, that whatsoever is his pleasure, may be
 ' done by me, and so I abide. If I have any Penance
 ' to do upon half an hour after six, I do it, and then
 ' I read two Chapters of the New Testament, bare-
 ' headed, and on my knees.

' At seven a clock, I go up to a Closet, where there
 ' are three Stations, the first to the Virgin, the second
 ' to St. Joseph, and the third to Teresa, to all which I
 ' render my little Devoirs; and afterwards, I give
 ' place to my affairs; but if there be no business urgent,
 ' I prostrate my self before God, till the time that I
 ' go to Mass, staying at the Church till half an hour
 ' after eleven, except on those days when we dine
 ' some poor people, for then I return at eleven.

' Before dinner, I make the Examen of the morn-
 ' ing, and some Prayers for the Church, for the Pro-
 ' pagation of Faith, and the Souls in Purgatory: after
 ' that, I say the *Angelus*: I dine at twelve, and in that
 ' while, have something read; half an hour after
 ' twelve, I spend an hour with them that have busi-
 ' ness with me, and that's the time I appoint for that
 ' purpose.

purpose: Afterwards, I go forth, whither the order of God shall direct: Some days are order'd and assign'd for certain Exercises, the rest are reserv'd and unlimited from one week to another: Now if it fall out, that I have nothing to do, I pray in a Church, but happen what will, I endeavour not to fail to visit every afternoon, the Holy Sacrament, and to spend about evening, an hour in Devotion: About seven a clock, when I have made some vocal prayers, we go to supper, during which time, one reads the Martyrologic, and the life of the Saint for the day following: Supper being done, I talk to my Children, and tell them something for their instruction: At nine a clock the Bell rings to Prayer, which all my Family is to be present at; which done, each one retires, but I keep me in the Chappel in Meditation till ten; and then I go to my Chamber, recommending my self to my God (according to my Bottom of Self-Annihilation) to the Holy Virgin, my good Angel, and other Saints: I take holy Water, and lay me down in Bed, where I say the *de Profundis* for the Dead, and some other little Prayers, and so endeavour to repose. And so you have in some sort the order of the day as to my Exterior.

But for the order of my Interior, I have not, as I may say, any; for since I left (it will be a year, the Holy Week next) my Breviary, all my forms have left me, and now instead of serving me as means to go to God, they would become hinderance: I bear in me ordinarily (but with many infidelities so great in all this, that I am about to speak of, that I write it not without regret, because I am nothing but vice and sin:) I bear, I say, in me ordinarily, an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of
the

the most Holy Trinity; or indeed, of some Mystery, which elevates me by a simple view to God; and with that, I do all that the Divine Providence enjoyns me, regarding not any things for their greatness or littleness, but only the order of God, and the glory which they may render him.

For the Examens; and things done in Community (which I mentioned before) I often cannot rest myself there: I perform indeed the Exterior, for the keeping of order; but I follow always my Interior, without making any change there; because, when a man hath God, there's no need to search him elsewhere, and when he holds us in one manner, it is not for us to take hold of him in another; and the Soul knows well, what it is which bottoms it more clearly, what unites it, and what multiplies and directs it.

For the Interior therefore, I follow this Attractive, and for the Exterior, I see the Divine Will, which makes me to follow it, and which carrieth me to govern my self according to it, with the discernment of his Spirit, in all simplicity: and so I possess, by his grace, in all things, a great silence Interior, a profound Reverence, and solid Peace: I confess me, usually on Thursdays, according to the order that hath been given me, and communicate almost every day, as perceiving my self drawn thereto, as also to stand in great need of it. In a word, The Bottom which hath been shewed me to stand on, is to render my self to God through Jesus Christ with such a purity, as hath in it operation, to worship God in Spirit and Truth, after a manner altogether stripe and naked, and of loving him with all my heart, with

with all my soul, and with all my power, and of seeing in all things, and adoring the conduct of God, and following it. And this only abiding in my soul, all other things in me are defaced and blotted out: I have nothing of sensible in me, unless now and then some transitory touches, but (if I may dare to say it) when I sound my will, I find it sometime so quick and flaming, that it would devour me, if the same Lord, who animates it (though unworthy) did not restrain it: I enter into an heat, and into a fire, and even to my fingers ends, feel that all within me speaks for its God, and stretcheth it self forth in length and breadth in his Immensity, that it may there dissolve, and there lose it self, to glorifie him. I cannot express this thing as it is, I do not make a stand upon any thing that passeth in me, but fall always into my nothingness, where I find my act of purity towards God, as above.

He concludes afterward in these terms:

'I beg your pardon, my Reverend Father, if this thing here be so ill ordered: I have set it down, as it hath happened to me, I should be very happy, if you could know all my miseries, for you would have them in great commiseration. This was the writing he gave to his Director.

They that shall read it, will judge, without doubt if they understand it well, and penetrate to the bottom, the sense of his words) that very great were the Vertues, and highly rais'd the perfection of this excellent servant of God; and by so much the more ought they to judge so, as they may assure themselves that he hath not a jot exceeded in the report of the things which concern him; but rather that he hath

hath diminished them; being by grace (and indeed by nature also) extremely reserved, and most considerate in whatsoever he said, and especially in speaking of himself.

§ 2. *The Source from whence these Vertues flowed.*

IF now we will examine the Principal of those Vertues and Perfections, and the Well-spring whence they issued, we shall find that it was, from the intimate Union which he had with the Lord Jesus Christ; whereunto he always above all things, gave up himself.

His sage and illuminated Director, the Reverend Father *de Condrien*, knowing that the Union with Jesus Christ; is the foundation of our Predestination, Justification, and Sanctification, of all the grace and glory which we can ever have; that Jesus Christ being the way, whatsoever is out of this way, can be nothing else but wandering; that he being the Truth, whatsoever is not conformable thereto, is nothing but lying; that he being the Life, whatsoever lives not by this life, nor is quickned by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is not alive, but of necessity dead: He did therefore that, which ought always to be done with great care, by all Directors of souls, which was to make him to know the importance, and the necessity of this Union, to fix him strongly and constantly to Jesus Christ, for the Government of his Interior and Exterior, to put him this Way, to bind him to this Truth, and to Unite him to this Life.

Mon-

Monsieur de Renty followed exactly this conduct, and therein made a great progress, which he went on in perfecting to his death, with marvellous improvements, so that as the last touches which the Painter gives to his Picture, are far different from those of the first rude draughts; or, as the Sun hath more of heat and light, as he advanceth higher in his career, and approacheth to Mid-day, than when he but newly riseth: In like manner, the applications, the ties, and the unions which this excellent man in his latter years had with Jesus Christ, and the actions which he either did for him, or received of him, were quite other from those at his beginning; for he was then wholly consummate in Jesus Christ, he had, as it were, passed into him, and he carried him, as it were, in a lively manner in his soul, in his thoughts, in his affections, in his desires, in his words, and in his works.

Hence it was, that he had no other object before his eyes, but Jesus Christ, that he thought not but of him, that he loved nothing but him, that he spake not but of him, that he wrought not but for him, and always after his sampler, that he read not but the New Testament, which he carried always with him, and endeavoured by all means possible to engrave the knowledge and love of it in all hearts.

Writing to his Director, the Year, 1646. concerning his dispositions, he sent him these words among other:

To speak to you of my Interior, I feel my self not to will, but God, and an union with our Lord Jesus Christ, to yield him all my homages: This is the fulness of my heart, and I feel this well, when I found it.

He

He said this to him in another Letter:
 'I am in great necessity of Jesus Christ, but I ought
 'to tell you by an acknowledgment of the Mercy of
 'God, by a certitude of this truth, that I feel that he
 'is more ruling in me, than my self: I know for all
 'that, that of my self I am but sin, but withal, I expe-
 'riment my Lord in me, who is my strength, my life,
 'my peace, and my All, I beseech him to become
 'our plenitude.

Moreover, in another thus:
 'I find, my self, said he, much troubled what to
 'send you, because all things become raz'd out of my
 'mind as soon as pass'd, and I cannot retain in me
 'any thing, but God, and this in a kind of hood-
 'wink'd blinded manner, with a naked faith, which
 'faith making me know the evil bottom which is in
 'my self, gives me notwithstanding great force and
 'confidence, by way of abandoning (and Self-Re-
 'jection) upon our Lord Jesus Christ in God. I have
 'found this morning a passage in St. Paul, which I be-
 'lieve our Lord hath put into my hand to express my
 'self by, seeing it is the very truth of what I expe-
 'riment: *Fiduciam autem talem habemus per Christum, ad
 Deum; non quod sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid a nobis,
 quasi ex nobis; sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est; This boasting
 we have by Christ to God-wards; not as if we were sufficient
 to think any thing of our selves, as of ourselves; but our suf-
 ficiency is of God.*

'It is about a fortnight since these words were put
 'upon my Spirit, without any contribution on my
 'part, or of any thing that might renew the Idea's
 'of them, *quare venam aquarum viventium, seek the vein
 of living water;* and just as they were express'd to me,
 'my spirit (like as when one comes up a River, to

* its Spring-head) was to seek Jesus Christ from the
 * beginning of his Pilgrimage, to the point of his
 * Glory, when set down in his Throne at the right
 * hand of his Father, whence he sends his spirit to
 * animate his Church, and enliven those that are his :
 * I saw that there indeed was the Source, whence the
 * springs of living waters do flow to us, and that thi-
 * *ther we were to make our addresles.

I could report here more such touches, with which
 his letters to his Director were bespringled : but I be-
 lieve I have given enough for the present, to evi-
 dence his disposition towards our Lord, and his union
 with him.

When he wrote to other persons, he always insert-
 ed something of our Lord, to excite them to bind
 themselves to him, and to propose him to themselves
 in all things, as a model of their actions.

One while he writes thus,

* Let us forget all, to think of this faith which makes
 * alliance between God and us through Jesus Christ,
 * who is come to publish this truth, which he hath
 * sealed with his blood, and which he will consum-
 * mate in his glory, at that time when we shall appear
 * to have been faithful in following his Spirit : Let us
 * go after, and with Jesus Christ to God, for he is our
 * way.

Another while thus,

* 'Tis a thing admirable, that it hath pleased God
 * to send us his Son, to the end that we may not look
 * on him any more as our Creator only, but also
 * through the alliance that we have with him, we may
 * call him Father. He is therefore our Father from
 * this time forward, and it is certain, that he consi-
 * ders us as his children in the person of his Son In-

D

carnate ;

‘carnate: But the thing of importance, is a firm
‘uniting of our selves to this Son, continuing that life
‘of his upon earth, within this of ours, by the dire-
‘ction of his Spirit.

Thus also in another Letter,

‘Let Jesus Christ be in each of us our bond, our
‘soul, our life, as he is our pattern: Let’s take a nearer
‘view of this Holy Original, enter into his Princi-
‘ples, lay hold on his desires, execute his works, and
‘let men know that we are Christians.

Writing to another he spake thus,

‘I adore and bleſs with all my heart, our Lord Je-
‘sus Christ, for that he opens you his heart, to pos-
‘ſeſs wholly yours: he will make it to dye, and will
‘reduce it to a holy Poverty, which ſhall cauſe you
‘to taſte the true Life, and complete Riches, and to
‘avow that it is a great mercy to belong to Jeſus
‘Christ: I beſeech him to beſtow on you his moſt ſan-
‘ctifying graces, and that we may both dye well, and
‘live well, by his Spirit: Let us enter into this Spirit,
‘which will give us the Sentiments, and the Energie
‘of the Children of God: All other preſence and ap-
‘plication to the Divine Maieſty which is not by this
‘union of the Soul to Jeſus Christ, is only of the
‘creature towards the Creator, which carries indeed
‘reſpect, but gives not the life and approaches of
‘children towards God their Father, where being
‘united to the Interior operations of Jeſus Christ,
‘we find there, the affections of true children; which
‘we cannot have, but by being united to the true
‘Son.

Let us end with that, which a perſon, to whom
he unboſom’d himſelf, confidently in this matter,
reports of him: This rare man, ſaid he, appear-
ed

ed touched with a very tender and fervent love towards our Lord Jesus Christ: I have observed, that his Conversations and Discourses did shoot always at this mark, to imprint in souls the knowledge and love of our Lord with true solidity. In discourse with him, I had often from him these words:

‘ I avow that I have no gust in any thing, where I
‘ find not Jesus Christ; and for a soul that speaks not
‘ of him, or in which we cannot taste any effect of
‘ grace, flowing from his Spirit (which is the principal
‘ of operations, both inward and outward, that
‘ are solidly Christians) speak not to me at all of such
‘ a one: Could I, as I may so say, behold both miracles
‘ and wonders there, and yet not Jesus Christ,
‘ nor hear any talk of him, I count all but amusement
‘ of spirit, loss of time, and a very dangerous
‘ Precipice.

And at several other times he said,

‘ Let us love Jesus Christ, let us unite our selves
‘ to his Spirit and Grace, miserable sinner, as I am,
‘ who love him not, yet should I be much joy’d at
‘ least, to see my defects supplied by others that
‘ love him fervently; but I am too unworthy to obtain
‘ a matter so great, and wherein my self do bear
‘ so small a part.

Seeing then this faithful servant and follower of Christ Jesus had so strong an application, and intimate union with his Divine Lord (as ’tis easie to gather from what hath been spoken) we cannot but ascribe to this application and union, all his virtues, which
D 2 we

we are going now to speak of in several; and to look upon them, as effects of this cause, streams of this Fountain, and branches of this Stem.

PART

PART II.

*His Vertues in particular, and first,
the Vertues which did perfect him
in regard of himself.*

CHAP. I.

His Penances and Austerities.

AS OUR flesh and senses are by their nature, and more by their corruption, very opposite to a Spiritual Life; and among the enemies of our weal and perfection, none more importunate or more violent than they: so God useth when he intends to elevate any to the accomplishment of vertue, and to make them Saints, to inspire in them, at the beginning of their conversion, a spirit of Penance, and mortification of their bodies: Monsieur de Remy being destin'd by God to this glory, and quickned by this Spirit, encounters his body with rigorous Austerities, thereby to reduce it to its duty, and hinder it from annoying him in his Interior Exercises.

He begins therefore to fast every day, making but one meal, which he continued divers years, until he was enjoyned otherwise, and to take more nourishment, to be the better able to undergo the great labours he undertook for his neighbour. Some days in the week, he wore an iron Girdle, set with a double rank of long prickles, and a bracelet of the same; on other days he disciplin'd himself rigorously, & at some times wore haircloth, having continually on his breast a bras Crucifix, reaching to the bottom of his stomach, the nails whereof being very sharp, entred into his flesh.

When he went into the Countrey, and was come to his Inn, he would go into the Kitchin, to eat there, if it might be, among servants, and other mean persons: and that for two ends, both there to mortifie his body, and to speak some good thing to those poor people: and when night constrained him to take his chamber, he dismissed his servants, to lie in other rooms, and himself past the night in a chair, or cast himself on a bed, in his cloathes, and boots, which was his custom till death.

Being come to *Amiens*, where I was, and a Lady (one of the chief of the Town) having prepared a stately bed in a brave Chamber for him, in honour of his vertue and quality, he was much troubled, and would not at all use it, but laid him down upon a bench, and the day after, as being much ashamed, complained to me of the Lady for it: so that to enjoy the blessing of lodging him at her house, she was faine to change his chamber and bed, and to accommodate him after his own mode; that is to say, where he might not be so much at his ease.

His Mortification in diet was very great, eating little, and always of the worst, as not forgetting that our
misery

misery came not, but by eating of delicious fruit : Dining in company on a fish-day, one of the guests that noted his actions, observed, that all he ate, was some Pears onely, and that with so great modesty and recollection, that one might easily discern, that his mind was on God, and not upon his meat.

When one of his friends, a man of piety, at *Caen*, entertain'd him one day at dinner with some little Ceremony as a person of quality, he ate very little, and became much mortified and ashamed, as he declared afterwards, that Christians should be Feasters; adding, that a little would suffice, and what a torment it was to him, to be where there was so much chear, as a thing quite contrary to the poverty of Christ; who notwithstanding should be to us for our rule: He would tell his friends, that a little bread, a little lard and butter, was sufficient.

Hcreupon, his friends acquainted with this grace of Mortification in him, took no more thought concerning his diet, knowing his best entertainment to be the meanest fare. The perfection of a Christian life, and the fulfilling of Gods will, was to him (after the example of our Lord) as most exquisite and delicious meat and viands; and when any gave him opportunity, or left him to his liberty, to practise this Mortification, it pleased him exceedingly. Often at *Paris*, when some deed of charity had drawn him far from home, that he could not return to dinner, he would step in (all alone or unknown) to a small Victuallings-house, or some Bakers shop, and make his dinner with a piece of bread, and a draught of water, and so very gay and chearful, go on with his business.

And what he practised for the mortifying of his gust, was in like manner done for his other senses, the sight,

the hearing, the smell, and the touch. Being come to *Pontois*, on a very cold day in winter, and lodging at the Carmelite Nuns, he desired earnestly the Nun that was the Door-keeper, to have no fire made, nor bed prepared for him; and after he had discoursed with some of them, he told the last, that he must go make some little visits (and that was to visit the Prisoners, the poor that were ashamed to beg, and to employ himself in some other deeds of charity, which he never forgot at any time, how little soever was his leisure;) He returned about nine a clock at night, when the Nuns went to say Matins, and without taking any thing to eat, went into the Church to his prayers, which he continued till eleven a clock, and then retired into his chamber, not suffering a fire to be made for him, although by his own confession, the cold did incommode him very much.

He constantly kept a vigilant eye over himself in every time, place, occasion, and even in the meanest things, for the mortifying of his body; daily putting it to some hardship, or at least hindring it from sense of pleasure: And to that end had found out some very notable and ingenious inventions; so bearing continually about him the mortification of the Lord Jesus in his body; that the life of Jesus might live and shine forth in it, well knowing, as the same Apostle elsewhere saith, *That those that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lust thereof:*

And to say the truth, the more a man is full of one thing, the less room there is for its contrary; the more one sinks into darkness, the further off from light; and, as we said above, there is nothing more opposite to the Spirit, than the flesh: so must we of necessity conclude, the more a man pampers his flesh, the more

more doth he indispose and estrange himself from the life of the Spirit.

Thus this illuminated person dealt with his body, as with his enemy; out of the design he had to lead a life truly spiritual. Whatsoever might content and flatter his senses, was insupportable to him; whence it happened, that one day, there slipt from him this word to a Confident, that God had given him a great hatred of himself: and this was advanc'd so far by his fervent and unshakable desire of mortifying himself, that beside the moderation that his Director was oblig'd to lay upon him, a famous person of our days, the Carmelite Nun of the Covent of *Beaulieu*, Sister Margaret of the Holy Sacrament, who lived and dyed in a fragrant odour of Sanctity, with whom he was most intimate in the bonds of grace, did out of divine light she had in that matter, much reprehend him for it; and gave him her advice in the business, whereunto, for the confidence he had in her (and that not without good cause) being willing to yield, he remitted something of his rigour, although not without complaint; which he testified to a person thus, in writing:

I know not, said he, why one should strive to keep in so lazy a beast, that stands more in need of the spur than bridle.

For all he was thus held in, he left not off the war which he made with his body, in each thing he could (but without transgressing the Orders he had received) till he thereby came to such a point of perfect Mortification, that his body became, as it were, dead, and insensible in all things; which now in a manner made no impression upon his senses; eating without gust (himself saying, that all meats were to him alike) seeing, as it were, without sight, so that after he had been
a long

a long time in some Churches, most richly adorned with stately ornaments, and those before his eyes; when one asked, if they were not very fine? he answered plainly, that he had seen nothing: By reason of his Mortification, he had no pain nor trouble at all from those things, which make other men so fret and take on, who are alive to themselves, and enslav'd to their bodies: neither was he only without pain, but (which as *Aristotle* saith, is the highest perfection of a vertue) he took great pleasure therein, which came not to him so much from abundance of sensible consolations (which may sweeten Austerities to an unmortified man) but from the ground and bottom of vertue intirely acquir'd and possessed.

CHAP. II.

Of his Poverty.

§ I. *Of his Poverty of Spirit.*

ONE of the most great and admirable Vertues that shone in *Monseigneur de Renty*, was this, that in the possession of riches, he was utterly disingaged from the love of them, and possessed in a most high degree (as we shall now declare) the first of the Beatitudes, which pronounceth, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; of grace in this world, and of glory in the other.

A truth, which served him for a powerful attractive, to endeavour the gaining of this rich treasure: Whereof writing to a person of Piety, he thus said:

‘I was the other day touch’d in reading the eight Beatitudes, and upon this word Beatitude I took notice, that in effect there were no other Beatitudes but these; for if there had, our Lord would have taught them, and therefore those ought to be our whole study: But what shall I say? we ground not our selves upon them, nor desire the grace to do it; but run after the Beatitudes of the world and our own Concupiscence, quitting that which is clear, and given us by our head Christ Jesus, to be in a state of hurley-burley and confusion, and consequently of trouble, danger, and unhappiness.

It was not to these kind of Beatitudes that he ran, but to those of the Gospel; and in particular to the first, concerning which, lets hear what one saith of him, a person very credible, and of his intimate acquaintance. I never saw men, said he, in so perfect a poverty of spirit, nor in so ardent a desire to feel the effects of it, as was he: And in the fervour of his desire, he said to me,

‘Procure by your prayers, that we may change this form of life, when will you labour with God, that this may be; this habit, and this wealth, is to me most painful.

I have talked since his death with a Father, to whom he had communicated his inclinations, to leave all; who told me, that one day he desired of him with many tears, and on his knees, his advice in the matter; and that he was never more surpriz’d, than to see *Monsieur de Renty* at his feet, and in these sentiments of poverty: And I have heard him say, that the touch from God, to separate him from the creatures, and to make him quit the manner of living suitable to his birth, was so powerful over his soul, that if another touch from the same hand had not kept him back at the same time,

time, he had abandoned all; and according to the example of *S. Alexis*, had gone to live a poor life, as he did: but that God, that imprinted this desire of poverty in him, did hinder the effecting of it, to keep him in the state wherein he had placed him; which was to him no small cross, because the desire torments and afflicts the Soul in proportion to its vehemency, when it cannot arrive to the possession of the thing desired: But because he was absolutely conformable (as it was his duty in all things) to the will of God, he bore this cross, as contrary as it was to his affection, with great peace, and a perfect submission to what God had ordered.

Another witness of like authority, gives him this testimony. He told me, said he, often, in the confidence we had together, that he was ashamed when he entered into his house, to see himself so well lodged in this world; and that it was one of his greatest afflictions to have so much wealth, and to be so much at ease, that he should be ravished to see himself reduced to bread and water, and to get the same by labour, and the sweat of his brows. Having one day asked him, how he could be so quiet amongst all the fastidious accidents and incommodities that he suffered: He answered me, upon condition that I would keep it secret, that through God's mercy, he found himself in a disposition of peace, and state of indifferency in affliction, as well as in joy; and that he had no sentiments any more of fear or desire of any thing. And of this, myself hath seen the experience in some difficulties, where the better part of his estate ran a great hazard, without any appearance of the least commotion in him; and his words were:

‘Seeing God hath given me the management of this estate

estate. I will do to preserve it what shall behove me, and then it is all one to me, what success shall follow.

Another reports thus: He had the Evangelical poverty in its perfection, being intirely estranged in spirit and thought, in heart and affection from all the wealth of the world: and he told me, that he felt no greater cross, than to have riches; and that he should be extremely glad to be a beggar and unknown, if it had been the will of God. Hence it came, that he bare a kind of holy envy towards the poor, that he deemed them very happy; that in beholding them, he said sometimes with sighing (but with a sigh that one might see came from the bottom of his heart) Ah! that I am not as they! that he honour'd, lov'd, care's'd, and kneel'd before them, not only in humility, but in esteem of their estate, in its disposing us so much to the perfection of the new Law, and resemblance it hath with Jesus Christ.

Being one day visiting the poor in the great Hospital of *Cash*, he was seen bare-headed, and on his knees, upon the floor of the great Hall, beating in a Mortar some Drugs for the use of the poor sick people; such was the respect and honour that he bore to those, for whom he laboured, that it put him into that posture.

But for an end, let us hear him tell us himself his sentiments upon this matter; and although he speak of himself, let's make no scruple to believe him, as being a person most worthy of credit. Behold therefore what he wrote to the Nun abovementioned:

'Sister *Margaret* of the Holy Sacrament: my most holy Sister, I have it in my heart, that the Holy Child Jesus (the Infancy of Jesus, was one of the Mysteries, to which more particularly and profitably
he

he applyed himself, as we shall see in its due place
'would have something of me, which he hath a desire
'should beg of him, and dispose my self for the obtain-
'ing of it: And I avow to you, that the more there comes
'to me of the riches of this world, the more do I discover
'the malignity thereto affixed, and that they produce
'nothing but garboil and trouble, and afford not much
'means of doing good: My heart is most strongly car-
'ried to an effective stripping my self of all, and to fol-
'low him alone (seeing he is my way) as being the most
'poor and depressed amongst all his followers. But
'that I know, that it would be a presumption to believe
'my self capable of this estate, and a temptation to put my
'self upon it, being at present, related as I am, I should
'pant and sigh thitherward very much: that which I
'will draw hence is this, that being ignorant of the coun-
'sels of God, I cannot tell how he will dispose of me for
'the future: and I offer my self up to whatsoever it shall
'please him, knowing, that with him, I can do every
'thing; as without him, I have neither the power nor
'will for any thing. My most dear Sister, I have great
'need of doing penance, and to be humbled, I am greatly
'ashamed of my condition, and of what I am, I have the
'commodity and abundance of all things of this world;
'but my family, and estate of things permits it not to be
'otherwise: and I see the Churches and the poor upon
'whom I would bestow it all, at least, as much as I may in
'justice part with, or else to be poor, as the poor are, so
'that I may be no more ashamed of being better provi-
'ded than they.

Thus you have his thoughts, which by Gods per-
mission are come to light, to make us see, what grace
can do in a heart well disposed, and to what a pitch
arrives this perfect Poverty of spirit.

§ 2. *His outward Poverty.*

THE high esteem and affection which this great servant of God had of the forsaking the goods of this world, being not able to contain it self within the Interior of his soul, appear'd outward and visible in a thousand effects, and carried him on, to the poverty Exterior in all ways possible: for, not to speak of the great Alms he gave to the poor (far different from the course of many, who though full of riches, yet never think of using them according to God's rule) he divested himself of very many things, to be impoverished as much as he could: for he parted with some books, because richly bound; wore no cloaths, but plain, and close together; used no gloves, what season soever, or at least a rare thing it was to see him have any; in effect, he had his hands so employed in deeds of charity, that little leisure he had to keep them within gloves: He carried no silver about him, but for Alms, and good works, growing daily richer in this Exterior poverty, and effective diminishment of what he had. I have seen him at first in Coach with a Page and Lackey, afterwards in Coach with a Lackey without a Page, then without Coach on foot with a Lackey; and in fine, alone without Lackey, and in effect without himself.

Speaking one day to a Confident of Evangelical poverty; he told him, that God had given him so ardent desires to possess it, that being not able (by reason of the bonds that withheld him) to abandon his goods, as he had often wished, for the better following of the most (not rich, but) poor Christ Jesus, made
poor

poor for us, he endeavoured to pass with as little as he could, and to cut off for his person, not only superfluous, and the very commodious, but also whatever was not precisely necessary: That walking alone in the Fields, his consolation was, to be there in liberty, to live as he pleased: But that after all, he was not able to find out a better cure for the fervour of his desires, than to despoil himself as much as he was able, of the property of all his goods, and to account himself no more than a Trustee and meer Steward in regard of his family, considering himself in the possession of them, no otherwise, than a poor man that received his necessities from God by the hand of his wife.

The forementioned person speaks of an Heroick action which this excellent man did; of which see here an account more at large in a Memorial, which I have under his own hand.

‘I make a resolution in the presence of my God, to
 ‘have care of Reparations, of Manufactures, of High-
 ‘ways and Causeys, with the goods that he hath given
 ‘me to dispose of; and this so much the more, as he
 ‘shall give me the grace, to make a total dismission
 ‘and resignation to him of my self, and of what I
 ‘have, at this next approaching Feast of his Nativity,
 ‘and to put my self into such a condition, that he
 ‘shall be the Proprietary and Owner, and I the Ste-
 ‘ward and Servant only, to distribute the same, in
 ‘readiness to yield it up at the least notice of his will.
 ‘By his grace therefore, I acknowledge this day, that
 ‘being from hence forward in a Plebeian and under-
 ‘ling condition among Christians, I ought to apply
 ‘my self to these businesses as far as there shall be
 ‘need, and occasions permit; namely, to labour in
 ‘them, even in the lowest employments that are,

to play the Mason and the like; since by his grace I have skill in some of these arts; And I ought to make as much account of these employments, as of those of assisting soules; not looking upon the things as they are in themselves, but on the will of God, and what he requires of me: I beseech the Lord from my heart to pardon me my failings herein, to this time: I make this present Memorial, upon the sight which he hath given me of them, this fifth of November, 1643. to serve me as a remembrancer of my Obligation.

This was his resolution and promise: Now let us look upon the performance. He made a building at *Giry*; which was one of the Demesnes he had in *Bry*; and the better to observe with what purity of Conscience, sublimity of thoughts, and disingagement of affection, he applied himself to it, I shall set down what I had in a Letter from him concerning it, *May 8 1648.*

Blessed for ever be our great God, by Jesus Christ, and by all the righteous, that are filled with his Spirit. I believe the order of God requires of me outward labour, among many other workmen, seeing necessity thereto obligeth me (as Father of the Family) about a house considerable for my children, which was like to fall, having not been inhabited for a long time. I avow to you, my heart doth much long after another Edifice, than that which is built with materials of stone: But I look upon this my work as a part of Gods justice, who destin'd the first man after the fall, and all his children to labour; thereupon I revere it, and apply my self thereto with a good heart and courage, though with some Mortification, from the nature of this penance,

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that

' that relates so little to the life of the Spirit. We know
 ' some of our ancient Popes, who are great Saints, con-
 ' demn'd to keep Mules, and I that am a great sinner, and
 ' deserve hell, and so mercifully dealt with, that I am not
 ' sent, but to the stone Quarries, nor into the banishment
 ' and penury of our first Christians, but into those grounds
 ' that go for my own. Oft in a day I think, that this
 ' labour is unacceptable; and to what purpose, say I
 ' sometimes, so many houses, which we must leave so
 ' soon, and which themselves will come at last to no
 ' thing? I am humbled for the work, but not for the
 ' application of my selfe to it.

In that of the 19th of July, thus he said, upon the
 same subject:

' The time that I live here in this place, I count very
 ' dear, regarding it is ordered by God, for the doing of a
 ' little part of the penance due to my great sins. If grace
 ' did not uphold me with this consideration, I should be
 ' much tormented, in a labour so ingrate, and so limited,
 ' as to build in the house of a secular, and bestow my time
 ' upon this work which requires assiduity: But I have a
 ' feeling, that the order of God is in it, and by his mo-
 ' tions I quit the state of *Mary*, to take that of *Maria*,
 ' accepting this humiliation with Self-annihilation, and
 ' with contemplation of the Divine Justice.

' That which makes me the more to know that there
 ' is of Gods order in it, is this, That from time to time,
 ' both Holidays and Sundays, the mercies of the Lord
 ' are so great to me, that I resent more of retribution
 ' from him in one instant, than the patience and hu-
 ' miliation of a sinner could merit in all his life. He
 ' opens himself so to me, that my hardness is mollified,

and

and makes me melt into tears; my eyes are so full of them, that very often I have much ado to keep them in, pierced as I am with love with reverence, and with acknowledgement of the effects of his goodness, which he renews in me by his enlightning presence, and manifestation of his inexplicable conduct which I cannot utter.

I understand hereby, that we are to reckon among graces this following the order of God, and not that of our own, by a singular and private spirit of pride, pretending the glory of god that we may dispence with our selves (though we preceive it not) from labouring in things mean and painful in our conditions, which notwithstanding our Lord blesseth, not according to the choice we make, but according to their agreement to his order: And our faithfulness draws not its worth from doing this or that but from an exactness in doing that which he requireth of us, giving up our selves wholly to his good pleasure. I see there is need of a great death to our selves, and a great depth of Self-annihilation, to follow so purely the conduct of grace, and not to be for own forms, but those of God,

In another of the 12. of *August*, thus he saith :

I daily continue my toiling here, which takes up much of my time and al-most all; but I dare not look aside, but only abase and submit my self to the Divine Ordinance. It was a work very gross and mean, for Jesus Christ to converse with men, who had more of rudeness, than these stones I deal with, and more of opposition to his purity, than they have to my workmens hands: And ye he suffered all, he bore all, and in fine, converted but a few : I beseech you, obtain for me a

part in his obedience, and his patience to the orders of God his Father.

And writing to one of his friends, he spake to him in this sort :

‘I am here in this Countrey, in the midst of four or five companies of workmen, to repair a Mansion House on the Demefn of my family, which was ready to fall : What can our spirit act in this work, which following the Spirit of Faith, ought to be a Pilgrim and Stranger upon earth ; without doubt it groans much, not at the order of God, but after its own Countrey, in the midst of its occupations, as things opposite to its liberty. We must do penance by labouring, it is so decreed by God upon the first transgression.

These were the Meditations which this excellent man had, while he was building, and which all Christians, who are made to settle, not on earth but in Heaven, in an Eternal Mansion, ought to be enlivened with, when they are about the like works.

CHAP. III.

His Humility.

POVERTY followed the Austerities and Mortification of the body, as having much connexion with them ; and Humility follows Poverty, yet considering what (according to *S. Augustine*) the poverty of spirit

spirit spoken of by our Lord in the first Beatitude, is nothing else but humility: in very deed, there is no people in the world more poor in spirit, than the truly humble, because they account themselves to be nothing, to have nothing, to be able to do nothing, and to be worth nothing, to be the refuse and off-scourings of the earth, and to have need of every thing, not assuming any praise to themselves for any thing whatsoever, Monsieur de Renty came to this pitch, and possessed this Vertue in a most Eminent degree.

And in truth, if Humility (as the all Saints tell us) be the foundation of Vertue, God having a design to raise up in him a magnificent and sublime Place for Vertues and Perfection, it was necessary the foundation should be laid very low, and his humility be very profound: He was rooted in this vertue so solidly, that it was a thing wonderful; and therein performed a number of so remarkable actions, that those persons who lived many years with him, and singularly well knew him, have assured us, that it were impossible to relate them all.

He had in an excessive esteem this important vertue, he loved it with all his heart, desired it with extream ardor, prayed urgently, and conjured his friends to beg of God, and obtain it for him: And as we see the stone descend with violence, and the waters fall down impetuously; the same motion made he toward Humility, as to his centre.

Out of this Sentiment, he wrote thus to one of his Confidants:

‘Have pity on me, I am more unfaithful than any creature of the world: Upon my knees, I beg of you to

‘believe it, If our Lord did not shew me what I am,
 ‘*Lucifer* would not be a little rich; but this benign Lord
 ‘shews me daily, through his mercy, my Nothingness,
 ‘it is thither his grace leads me.

To another he wrote thus:

‘All my resolution is in these words of David, *Elegi*
 ‘*obscure esse in domo dei mei* (I have chosen to be lit-
 ‘tle and abject in the house of God.)

To another also thus:

‘I am carried to demand of God a life much humbled,
 ‘suffering, and unknown to men: I find a great attra-
 ‘ction thither.

And I have a Paper written with his own hand, and
 all of it with his blood which contain these words:

‘I give you my Liberty, O my God, and beg of you
 ‘that Nothing, which every Christian must arrive at,
 ‘to rise purely towards you.

Gaston Jean Baptiste.

Dominus Jesus semetipsum exinanivit usque ad mortem
obscure propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum.

This 3 of December, 1644. Amen.

‘Our Lord Jesus emptied himself to death, even the
 ‘death of the cross; wherefore God also hath exalted
 ‘him.

You see here his inclination and attractive, and not
 without good reason; for considering first, that he had
 propounded to himself our Lord as a pattern for his
 life,

life, with a determinate resolution to follow him in whatsoever he could. And that secondly, Humility is the proper Vertue of Jesus Christ, as S. Bernard, after S. Paul, calls it: he therefore embraced this Humility with his whole affection, gave himself up to it with all his forces, and practised it in its utmost latitude, as we are going now to see, by that which follows:

But before we behold him in the actions of this Vertue let us listen to what he teaches, and the light he gives us concerning it.

‘Humility; said he, is the Basis which carries and
‘upholds the whole work of God in us, it makes the
‘creature so naked, and so separated from it self, that
‘it leaves it not the power to make any cast of an eye
‘upon it self, but renders it so taken up in the greatness
‘of God, that it becomes lost, in reverence of him, in
‘self-abasement and annihilation. This is the grace of
‘Christians in their Pilgrimage, who divested and spoiled
‘of all, esteem themselves but a *Nothing*, and very
‘puff of being, which having nothing but what it received
‘from God, hath not instinct or inclination, but
‘for God: Its a brave humility to see nothing in ones
‘self but Nothingness; and he that sees not there nothing,
‘sees not there any thing at all. So the soul
‘which sees nothing in it self, findes nothing in it self to
‘bottom on; and by this means, always points towards
‘God, like a needle touched with a Loadstone, that
‘having been encombred with all sorts of trash and
‘trifles, and afterward disingaged of them, would
‘forthwith turn towards her North, and thitherward
‘remain always fixt, although the tempest of the sea
‘and winds should turn upside down the Vessel.

Thus have we his disposition, and the aspect of a soul truly humble, beholding nothing in it self, and God in his Majesty.

S. 1. His Humbleness of Heart.

HUMILITY may be divided into three sorts; The Humility of the heart, of the words, and of the works; And seeing the humility of the heart, is the principal and true one, of which alone, our Lord gave himself a samplar, and of which the two other are but the effects, if they be true: or otherwise they are but only shadows and phantasms of Humility; therefore we begin with that of the heart.

And this we say consists, in the humility of our understanding, and of the thoughts, of the will, and of the affections, to be well acquainted, and know truly, what a man is of himself, and that he is made Nothingness and sin; and in consequence of this knowledge, to take up most mean and low opinions of himself; to judg himself unworthy of all esteem and praise, to abase himself, and love his own abasement. A thing most excellently performed by this perfect follower of Jesus Christ.

He had so low an opinion of himself, that it would be a difficult thing to unfold it; and although he had most rare qualities, natural and supernatural, yet he saw nothing in himself, but as we have said, that Nothingness and the sin: And out of a true and sincere perswasion, he thought himself the most unworthy of all men; assuming that title in some of his Letters, but the name which usually he gave himself was,

was, *Sinner*, and *A great Sinner*, which he repeated very often, and with a spirit truly humbled.

That which I have noted in him for the space of six years, wherein I have had the honour of his acquaintance (said a person worthy of belief) was a most profound humility, which kept him in a perpetual self-abnegation before God and the creatures, but after such a manner, as I have never seen in any man whatsoever, although I have been acquainted with most holy souls: The greatness of God humbled him, even to an abyss or immeasurable depth;

'And is there (said he, one day to me) any thing great, in the presence of that Greatness? I see my self there so little, so little, and nothing.

And afterwards being elevated to God in this Sentiment of littleness, he said:

'A mote in the Sun is very little, but yet I am far less in the presence of God, for I am not any thing.

Afterwards humbling himself in another sense, he said.

'Alas I am too much; I am a sinner, and Infidel, an Anathema through my crimes.

And besides he wrote to the same person thus:

'Methinks I break my self in pieces before God, as when I stamp an egg in pieces with my foot upon the ground, and I be spoken of, that I have so much as a name, is a strange thing.

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This so exceeding base opinion which he had of himself, made him say oftner than once, and ready to weep, that he was much astonished at the goodness of men, in suffering of him; and that he could not enough wonder, why every where they threw not dirt at him, and that all the creatures did not bandy against him. This same opinion had perswaded him, that it was much boldness in him to speak, and that men shewed great mercy towards him in enduring his conversation, which he believed was very burthen some.

I have seen him very often (saith a person of piety, that well knew him) humble himself even to the centre of the earth, while he spake to me of God, saying, it was not for a man of his condition to speak of him, but that he ought rather to contain himself in silence: And so, he spake not of God, without some particular inducement that our Lord gave him, either for the necessity of his neighbour, or for some other good which God would draw thence for his glory; keeping a distance from this discourse out of humility, as if he had not known how to speak two words of him. In a Letter to another, he said:

‘Let us live as we are in truth; what place can we hold
‘before God and his Saints, but that of nothing? with
‘amazement, that we are endured, being a Nothing of
‘all good, and a compound of all evil.

This humility of heart, was general in him, because he practised it in each thing, there being not the least thing that serv’d him not for an absement. He abased himself much, in the consideration of the feebleness of our nature; whereof he wrote to me one day this sentiment:

It concerns me to tell you one thing before I end, which keeps me in a marvellous dislike of my self, and makes me resent, how little confidence there is to be had in man: it is this, that when S. Peter and the Apostles make the greatest profession of their fidelity to our Lord, our Lord then findes them of the infidelity they would commit, saying to S. Peter, that he could not follow him whether he went. S. Peter answers him, why cannot I follow you now? I am ready to give my life for you. Thou give thy life for me (replies our Lord) I tell you in truth, the Cock shall not Crow, but thou shalt deny me thrice: S. Peter not understanding these words, continues in the protesting of his fidelity; and upon occasion of apprehending of our Lord, draws his Sword, and sheaths it not again, till our Lord commands him: He follows him, and forsakes him not, thus apprehended, but yet afterward, he denies him upon the bare word of a maid servant.

The apprehensions of these weaknesses, which come to me not by search or study, but by Divine enlightning, and by the impression which they make in me, keep me wholly in annihilation, without any assistance in my self, which I place altogether in God and his Son our Lord: This condition will keep me in a marvellous littleness, if I were faithful therein: I have some instances, when methinks my whole body is crushed, bruised, annihilated, and my interior much more.

To another person he wrote:

Pity it is to see man and his infirmity, it is sometime important, that he have experience of what he is, that he may neither forget himself, nor the place which he ought to hold, *ut non gloriatur omnis caro in conspectu ejus*, (That

(That no flesh might glory in his sight) that being
abased, nullified, and rendred as a thing that is not
at all, Jesus Christ may be in him, the life of grace and
holiness waiting for the time of our redemption, that
is to say, the entry of his glory, and as it is written, he
that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And to another thus :

'The state of our poverty, and the sight of our mis-
eries, makes us know the need we have of grace, and
settles the soul upon the Nothingness of her self, and the
perswasion of her inability to all good; and in this truth,
that she never hath been, nor can be, but retardment
and diminution to the operation of God in her.

The knowledge of his faults and sins, humbling
him strangely (as indeed they are the most just, and
greatest causes a man can have of humiliation) made
him write one day to me thus :

'I assure you, I lack for no matter to make me hum-
ble, and to labour in good earnest, to correct my self
although with patience, for I experiment and see
clearly, that though we labour and wish earnestly to
get out of our imperfection, our Lord sometimes leave
us there a long while, to make us know our weakness
and to humble us.

He desired to be advertised of, and reprehended for
his faults, and we shall see now what he observed
therein, at the begining of his call to this high per-
fection. It came to pass, that a person which was
much below him, had order from his Director to ad-
vertise him, if he saw any thing in him that was contrary

to perfection, when this person gave him notice of some failing, though very light, and indeed but of the shadow of a fault, he listened thereto with respect and thanks, and humbled himself for it, as if he had committed some crime; and he accused himself, when he thought he had any failing, upon his knees, saying, he was a miserable sinner, and that he had committed such a fault, which yet often, very hardly could one discern to be any. This exercise, as being most wholesome and efficacious, was very useful to him, for the making of a great progress; for our nature, by reason of its feebleness, hath need of such props to walk uprightly, and not fall.

If his imperfections and his sins humbled him, his excellent qualities, and the graces which he received from God, did the same also: And the same things, from which the greatest part of men draw nothing but vanity, served him for motives of self-abasement: The Spirit of Jesus Christ, wherewith he was enlivened, extremely estranged him from the Grandeurs of the world, making him not only condemn them, but also to be ashamed thereof; so that he took occasions of abasements from his own condition, because so high in the world, and from the secular advantages which it gave him; which made him often to groan before the Majesty of God, and to say, that he was in a condition very low and plebeian, according to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that he had great confusion to see himself in that estate.

From whence it came, that being born a Gentleman, of so good rank, as we have said, he renounced his Nobility, and gave it into the hands of our Lord, who, in return, imparted his own to him (as he made it down to a holy soul;) that is to say, his love, which
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by its proper force, transforming man in God, divesting him of himself, and leaves nothing in him but God alone, there living and reigning; and by this means raiseth him thus Deified to the highest degree of Nobility that he can mount to: Hence it was, that he endured with pain, that one should call him Monsieur, and he said sometimes smilingly, among his families, I am a fine Monsieur, it is well for me; and in his Letters, he complained that they treated him as in that quality: And in one of them, giving another (course) or career to his humility, he said,

Believe me, I pray you, it is great pity of me, I take against the Monsieur, which I had rejected; my pride must have these her appendices, rather than deceive your Candour, which else perhaps make you mistake in me, a piece of glittering glass for a Diamond.

Out of his humility it was, that he would not bear the title of Marquess (which was due to him, as proper to his house, in regard the Emperor, Charles the first, had erected *Ketty* into a Marquisate) and he suffered only that of Baron of *Ketty*, by which he was commonly called.

For the graces and gifts of God, as they were received in a soul well disposed, so produced they most excellently their true effect, which was to abate and elevate the Soul both together, to raise it to God, and to abate it to it self. And first, his humility made him hide as much as he could the gifts of God, and so hath rob'd us of the knowledge of a thousand brave actions, which might have been very serviceable to this History.

Secondly, when he received any favour from God,

or that one rendred him any honour, the light whereby he saw the Nothingness of the creature, and the discernment he was endowed with, in distinguishing the precious from the vile, and that which is done on Gods part, in all good things, from that which man bringeth thither of his own, was the cause, that in those things he assum'd no share at all ; but referred all to God, as to the true Source ; and so in the management of those great goods, which God enriched him withal, he had always his hands clean, without doing wrong to God, or touching that which appertain'd to him ; and for himself, he kept quite out of sight of all vanity, which slides most subtilly and most easily into a spirit, that abounds in riches of heaven, as well as those of the earth, if he look not very close unto it.

Nor would he therefore, that any one should consider him, in what he said or did ; but regard God alone therein : He wrote thus to one that much desired of him a visit.

I cannot bear, but with pain, the Account that you make of my Visits and Society : Let us look much upon God, let us bind our selves strictly to Jesus Christ, that we may learn of him a profound annihilation of our selves. O my God, when will it be, that we shall have no more a sight upon our selves, when we shall speak no more of our selves, and when all Vanity shall be destroyed.

And he wrote to another :

I beseech you not to regard in me, save my infirmities, and a depth of Wickedness, and Pride very horrible that is in me, that is it, for which I shall have need that all the World talk to, and punish me.

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In the third place, he esteemed himself most unworthy of the Graces and Favours of God, and believed there was not one of them, how little soever it were, but was far above his merits; and for the great ones, he was so full of, they did put him to a Non-plus. He wrote to a Confident.

The Gifts of God are sometimes so great, that they put us as I may so say, beyond our selves (and if it were possible we could find means to recoil our selves further off, than beyond Nothingness) we should do it. You see among men, that when one receives a Gift that bears some proportion to him, he renders Thanks and Acknowledgment to the giver for it: but if a Prince be Liberal to a poor man, according to the Grandeur of his own Power, whether it be a Sum of Money, or a Place, you shall see this poor man recoil, and say, Alas, my Lord, I think you know me not, I must not thank so much, I am unworthy of it: In like manner, there are Blessings that go beyond our Expectations, or Capacities, and which make us see what we are, without daring to lift up our Eyes towards them, their brightness doth so much dazzle, and their greatness so much astonish.

In fine, he humbled himself always for the favour of God, because he thought that either by his sloth, he was not answerable to their extent; or that by the infirmity of nature, he used them, and made them lose some part of their force, as it happens to Plants of the Levant, which removed into a strange soil, do not retain their vertue but degenerate, and favour of the earth they are removed to: And if the spiritual things of nature are allayed and corrupted in their passage through our senses, how much more reason is there to think that the Divine and Spiritual things of Grace

will there become enfeebled. These considerations rendered him most humble, even in the greatest gifts of God, and in things of most sublimity.

§ 2. *The pursuance of his Humility in heart.*

AS the Affections we bear to any thing, are always founded upon the esteem we make of it; so Monsieur de Renty, esteeming himself so low, so little, and nothing, in consequence thereof, did extremely abase and vilipend himself within his heart: This he did in every thing, and one of his strongest inclinations, according to Grace (which is a great token of the Spirit of God in a Soul) was to be always condemning of himself.

He wrote to his Director:

I have at the same time two apprehensions, quite contrary; the one, to avow to you, with thankful Acknowledgement to God, that he fills me with effects of his Goodness, and impressions of his Kingdom; and the other, that I am more disposed to condemn, than to regard my self; for upon the whole, what I do is pitiful.

Another time, after some speech to him of many great enlightnings and excellent sentiments which God had communicated to him; he told him,

I rest not upon all this; I told you only what is past, to render you an account, not making use of my judgement, but to condemn my self for Vices, suspending it as to other things, and committing it to God.

He wrote to another Confident :

I know not what will become of our business, one must not speak a word in sweetness and patience, but I shall lose my Credit somewhat ; if this could be thoroughly lost, it would be great justice : Alas, if no body endur'd me, and all the world condemn'd me, my Pride perhaps would be humbled.

Carried on by this Spirit, he had an ardent desire (though always with his ordinary tranquillity, and giving himself up to the orders of God) to receive some disgrace :

If I were to wish any thing, it should be, to be much humbled and nullified, and to be treated as an off-scouring by others : This would be my joy, but I believe I deserve not so great a favour.

This desire carried him to such a point, that had he not been with-held with the consideration of greater good, he had done strange things, to be disesteemed and receive confusion : Out of this sentiment and abundance of his heart, he said thus to one :

I should have great pleasure, if it were permitted me, to go naked in my shirt through the Streets of Paris, to make my self disesteem'd and taken for a Fool.

Whence we must observe two things : the first, that God gives sometimes to holy Souls, some thoughts, affections and desires, so raised above the common pitch and humane reason, that they may seem extravagant ; as this here which he gave to Monsieur de Remy, and which was, before him also, in our Founder S. Ignatius. The second is, that we must not

as all put in execution such desires, till before hand, they have been well examined, and justly weighed in the ballance of Charity, and edification of our Neighbour.

This burning desire which he had to be dis-esteem'd, made him seek for, and love his own abjection, and when it came, to take it, not only with patience, but also (which is the highest step that one can mount in humility) with joy. He gave an evident and notable testimony thereof in the first journey he made to *Dijon*, whither a Suit that he had with the Lady his Mother, and which to him by an extraordinary dispensation of God, was one of the greatest exercises of Patience and Humiliation, that he underwent in all his Life (of which I shall speak more at large in the following Chapter) had obliged him to go: for thus he wrote to his Director the 24th. of July, 1643.

I am at *Dijon* now, seeing God is so pleased; where I have learnt by the prejudicate Opinions, that were entertain'd concerning me, what it is that God would draw from my journey; which is, that I lead a Life secret and unknown to men in the spirit of penance. The bruit which they had spread concerning me was, that I was a Bigot, and had nothing but Artifices, and shewes of Devotion, for the coluring of my Naughtiness; that indeed I have kept my self much private in my Closet, out of fear to give, by coming abroad, rather Scandal than any Example of Vertue: I have found a generality that sollicit against me, though such as from whom I had good cause me thinks, for divers good Reasons to hope for a Prop than from any other, but have found the quite contrary: But so also, as God hereby hath done me many

favours. I have been to see them, where I have received Humiliation with great joy. I have been very wary of opening my self in any thing that might recommend me unto them: I have only done in my business what Truth required, and for any thing else, I made it matter of Confusion and Humiliation, as I ought to do: I shall be here, I believe, as one Excommunicate, and the Scape-Goat of the Old Law, chased into the Wilderness for my enormous Sins, for which I am of Opinion God would have me do Penance, not by meer pain onely, but by such, as withal brings shame and confusion with it: I tell you this, to render you some Account, not dwelling on it any longer; my sole scope being to love God, and to condemn my self.

§ 3. His Humility in Words.

THE Humility of heart in which Monsieur de Renty was deeply rooted, produced in him the Humility of Speech, which hindred him ever from speaking any word that favoured of vaunting, or that carried the least tincture of arrogance, and esteem of himself, or which was uttered in a haughty manner, or in a tone imperious or conceited; but on the contrary, they were all of them tempered with Humility and Modesty: and as he deemed himself to be indeed a Sinner, Lazy, Ungrateful, Perfidious, Ignorant, so did he set forth, and qualifie himself with these Names and Titles: we have seen hereof already something before, whereto we will add also this, which he wrote to a certain Person:

I am, to speak the Truth, but an Idiot, a poor Lazy Sinner, and a Sinner.

Written

Writing to a Priest, he said :

What do I (an unclean One, and a Plebeian in Grace, and in Condition) in the Church, who Live in a State that Jesus Christ refused for himself? I speak to a Priest, and to the Anointed of the Lord, my God; if I should make a reflection upon my self, what should I be before my own Eyes? What am I then before thine, and those of thy Servants.

He wrote to another person :

I thank you for those Devoirs of Devotion, which you have rendered these twenty four and twenty five days last past, for a thing so base as my self, who deserve no room, but among the Children of Adam, that deceive all the world, and who have reason to fear the Anger of all the Children of God, if the Prayer of his Son upon the Cross had not implead'd Forgiveness for his Persecutors.

And to another also :

Seeing I am born with so willingly, and that you persevere to desire this of me, I beseech my Lord, in the hand and disposing of whom I would be wholly, that he make use (if it please him) of this miserable Rush, for the giving you some Consolation, in the Life of his Children, and the ways which may lead you to the Liberrance.

He writ a great number of Letters, and it is a wonderful thing, that there is not among them so much as one, wherein he doth not vilifie himself, and which carries not with it some touch of humility; and he did the same too in all his Conversation: for although he had a design to annihilate himself the more, and to do that which generally speaking, is conceived to be the best (except in occurrences where vertue obliges us to practice the contrary) to

speake nothing of himself at all, neither good nor ill, yet was to him almost impossible to retain himself from it, in regard of that exceeding low opinion and dis-esteem he had of himself; whereupon when a Confident of his, said one day to him, this was not well done to speake so ill of your self, he presently smote his breast, avowing, *He did ill.*

Its true, that a man may speake ill of himself through Pride, upon design to skim off to himself by this false Humility, a little Glory, and to get some Reputation of an Humble Person: but when all is done, we find not that the Proud are much subject to this fault at least thus much we shall find, that it is very hard to speake of ones self from to great depth of Humility as did this man of God.

Who indeed spake of himself very ill, and in terms of great confusion, and very often; but yet notwithstanding, without molestation or annoying of any one, and in such a manner, that we might evidently see, that he spake from the bottom of his heart, and as he thought: And that which is yet more wonderful, he had such a grace of speaking ill of himself, and to his confusion, that many have marked and experimented, that the words of Humility and Confusion which he said of himself, did imprint the same disposition in them that heard him, bringing into their Souls the same Effects of self-lessening, and sentiment of Humility.

When by the particular motion of the Holy Ghost he spake of such Graces and Mercies as God had shewed him, it was always with an humbled and self-annulling spirit. He wrote to a person thus:

I am no other than a Sinner, have pity on me, adoring for me the goodness of God; and of our Lord; who, to speak in the terms of the Gospel, turns in sometimes among Sinners, I can tell some news of that with Zacheus, but I am confounded, for not producing in all my Life, that which his Love and Gratitude made him do in a moment.

And to another:

I beseech our Lord to keep me very low, before him, and before you; for I ought to bear the shame of my Crimes in all places, seeing I am altogether miserable; yet so as without ceasing to joy with you in saying Misericordias Domini in aeternum Cantabo (I will sing of the mercies of God for ever.)

When he spake of pious persons, joyned with him in exercises of Charity, he used often these terms:

If I may be so bold, I pray you salute them from me, I esteem my self very happy to be the last of that Company, I am altogether incapable and unworthy of it (and yet notwithstanding he was the bringer about of it) I shall be condemned by you all, if you have not pity on me, and redeem me from my miseries.

§ 4. His Humility in his Actions.

AFTER the Humility of the Heart and Speech, comes that of Action; which Monsieur de Renty practised in an excellent manner: We have already seen it in divers passages, we shall see it again in many other, and particularly when we speak of his Patience, and of his Charity towards the Poor,

and the sick: But besides all this, I shall not doubt to say that he was continually attentive to all occasions of Humility, so that none of them escaped him, without being made use of.

Since his special vocation to the service of God, he would not suffer they should carry him any more a cushion to the Church; but, to be there hid and disregarded, he mingled himself among Mechanicks and mean persons; where he was often crowded and incommoded as not being known, which he endured with great delight: He kept himself alway as much as he could (with the humble Publican) at the lower end of the Church: And at *Dijon*, in the Church of the Vesulines, the Nuns that attend at the gate, spied him at prayers at the lower end of the Church, with his arms bent in form of a cross, when the people were gone that stood there with him; yea, and often he said his prayers before the door when it was shut, that he might not, said he, put any to the trouble of opening it to a poor sinner. When he heard high Mass in his Parish, he went always to the Offertory; together with some poor man, and was seen sometimes with the same to accompany the holy Sacrament through the streets, when no man of note was there but himself onely.

During the war at *Paris*, he went himself to buy bread for the poor, carrying it through the streets, and as much of it too as his strength would permit. At also at the same time, when he did the charity to a Monastery of Nuns, as to take in custody their Church plate, he pressed them very much, to let him carry to his lodging (which was almost two miles thence) and on foot as he was, a piece very great and weighty; but as he had the humility to desire it so had they

the discretion not to permit it; When they desired him at the same monastery, that when he was pleased to do them the favour to visit them, he would come in his Coach, by reason of the distance, and incommodity he received in coming: He answered pleasantly, that he lov'd not to make use of a Coach, because that smelt something of the Monsieur, and that he must endeavour to make himself in every thing very little; He went therefore thither on foot, and returned the shortest days at five or six a clock at night, all alone, and sometimes in thawing weather; when being told of the great pains he took, he made answer that our Lord humbled himself, and took toilsome pains for the good of souls, in a far other manner sure, and that he was his pattern.

Being one day to go see a person of very great quality, about a business which much concerned the glory of God, he would not use his Coach, although he were to traverse in a manner all *Paris*, and that when it pour'd down with rain, but go thither on foot; one motion'd, that he would at least let a Cloak be carried by a Lackey, to take it when he came thither, and not present him self before that person in a Cloak altogether wet, and speak to him in such unseemliness, but he yielded not; yet to accommodate his humility with decency, he cast that Cloak above his own, and past through the streets, so far in this humble equipage; and afterwards in a Noblemans house, laid aside the wet Cloak, and appeared in the other ordinary one of his own.

But behold here another effect of this humility, whereof he wrote to his Director the 20 of *December*, 1646.

It becometh me now, saith he, that I render you an Account of a business that passed the other day: Madam, my Lord Chancellor's Lady, sent me a packet of Letters, wherein I found some from the King with all the Seals and Formalities, wherein I was made Councellor of State, but my thoughts were not taken up at all with the business. I sent her word, that I would assume the honour to see her, to thank her, for that my Lord Chancellor vouchsafed to think of me; that I honour'd more than so, that which had the mark of the King, and which came from their hands, than not to receive it with all Respect: But I most humbly begg'd one thing of her, that living in a kind of plain and vulgar manner, as I did, she would be pleased to take in good part, if (with all Acknowledgement premised of my exceeding Obligations to them) I did not Accept those Letters, and that the business might sleep without noise: Some represented it to me as a thing worth the thinking on, for that a Commitment might be very necessary for me in some sort of Occurrences; and that a Pension of 2000 Livres per Annum, (about 200 Pound Sterling) would afford me Ability for the giving of more Alms. To the first point I Answer'd, That by the Goodness of God, I had no need of it; and that often, the Commitments prove a great vexation to those upon whom they are executed: That this should be our work, to bear our own little ordinary Crosses, without laying extraordinary ones upon others. And for the second, that God having given me more of Riches, than I had need of, I thought I was not obliged to Augment them, but to keep me in my little way of living: you see how we stand as to this business.

Whereupon let me tell you, that this thing cannot be effected so, but that I must take upon me also the Quality of a Councellor of State, and must have a dependence upon the State, as a Pensioner of the King. Now by the Paper that some while ago I sent you, you may see that I have given up

my worldly Nobility to God, and this thing here, would derogate much from it; and moreover, it would be a step to an engaging of me I know not were, which now I see not, nor will be, having other things to fix my eyes on. My disposition towards Affairs of that Nature, is to have no share at all in them: If per-force, and without my seeking, they come upon me, I shall count it a real Cross, which our Lord will in such a Case will give me strength to bear. To conclude, *Elegi abjectus esse in domo dei mei, & absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce domini nostri Jesu Christi* (I have chosen to be a door-keeper in the house of my God, and God forbid that I should rejoyce in any thing, save in the Cross of Christ.) So have you the Inclinations I find in my self.

This was that he writ to him, concluding with these words, which carry with them another touch of Humility, and much Wisdom:

I have been willing the Business might be Concealed for the avoiding of Ostentation, which is found often in the Refusal of things that have something of Lustre, and give Occasion of Talk.

And thus he carried himself in that Conjunction: but notwithstanding, sometime after, he was constrained by good Advice, in consideration of a Business that much concerned the Glory of God, and Relief of the Poor, to Accept of these Letters, and that Quality, and to make use of it.

In a Paper he wrote to the same person, I find this that follows, which makes much to our purpose:

Walking

Walking one day this Lent thorow the Streets of Paris, much be-dirted, and very poor to look at, I bore in me the resentment of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 4. 13. when he saith, That he was as the scum and off-scouring of the World: I returned (in my mind) blessing for reviling, and the rest of that passage, so much as fell under my passive obedience, both actually receiving illumination to understand it, and strength to execute it: I know well how much neatness and new things, even to a Boot, even to a glance, and a look, do hurt, if one take not good heed, the simplicity and dignity of this Christian self-vilifying. And I saw it was a great Temptation for a man to think to preserve his estate of Grandeur and Note, is hopes to be thereby more Exemplary, and have more Weight and Authority for the Service of God: This is a pretext that our Infirmary makes use of in the beginning, but perfection draws off at last to Jesus Christ, who was humbled upon the Cross, and made the least of men: What an honour is it to keep company with Jesus Christ, so lovely, and so little followed, in his Ignominies and Humiliations: it is one of my Errors that I have not yet well begun it.

The great knowledge and marvellous sense that he had of these Truths, and of the lowliness of Spirit (whither ought to tend and come the true Children of God, and perfect followers of Jesus Christ) made him often to say:

Let us be little, and very little: Oh this holy littleness, it is a great matter.

From this Spirit it was that he loved low and mean things, and shun'd whatsoever it was that outwardly carried Splendor with it; whether he knew, that Nature (in a secret reflex upon it self)

is always carried, and even in things most spiritual and holy : as on the contrary, Grace (as being the Grace of Jesus Christ) carries to things of no Repuration, such as he embraced.

And he avoided, out of the same thought, whatever it was that held of the extraordinary : and said, that in Exercises, wherein there appeared even most of Perfection, as in observing Fasts and other Penances more than others, there was not in them sometimes so much, as in the common Exercises; for the meanes of which is recompensed with the mortification of our Nature ; which Nature very often seeks its self in the Extraordinaries, and the Singularities; being much pleased to have something above others, and so be thought of and spoken of, with the more esteem.

He kept the same guard upon his speech, that he might not in discoursing of spiritual things, and the highest mysteries make any use of terms magnifick and pompous, or of words new and uncouth ; and if it fell ought, that he uttered any such, he shewed it was with pain, and because he could not express himself other ways; insomuch, that neither in his actions, nor in his words, would he have any thing that made appearance of Grandeur, or of singularity.

It was moreover an act of humility and wisdom in him, to make esteem, and to speak with advantage, of other mens carriages for their Interior, although they were far below his own, saying, that we ought most carefully, take heed of speaking like the Pharisee, *I am not as other men.* And writing to me one day of this subject :

God forbid, said he, that I should believe, there is any thing singular and extraordinary in me, although I owe him extream acknowledgments, for his infinite mercies.

But among all the effects and testimonies of his humility, the manner of carriage towards his Director, ought, without doubt, to have place in the first rank: He did nothing, were it of never so little consequence, that concerned himself without his conduct; to him he propounded the thing, either by word of mouth, if he were present, or if absent by writing clearly and punctually, desiring his advice, his pleasure, and benediction upon his resolution: Those were his terms, and that with so much humility, respect, dependence, and submission of his own sense, as was admirable; and after without return or disputing, he followed simply and exactly his order even as much as could be done, in a well reformed Religious order, by the most resigned and obsequious novice.

His director having written to him something concerning his perfection, he answered him in these terms:

I beseech you believe, that although I am most imperfect, and a great sinner, if yet you do me the honour and favour to send me a word of what you know to be necessary for me, I hope with Gods help I shall profit thereby: I pursue not after any thing but to find God, and Jesus Christ, with as much simplicity, as verity: I pretend to nothing in this world, but this; and out of this I desire nothing.

See what a submission here was: although he had (which makes the marvel) an excellent and most clear spirit; and was endued with so high prudence, and great insight in each thing, that he was consulted by word of mouth and by letters, from diverse places by a very great number of persons of every age, sex, and condition, both of Secular and Religious.

For the practising so highly this submission, he fixed his eyes upon our Lord (who in each thing was his model and his light) in that submission, which he rendered to S. Joseph, wherewith he was extraordinarily affected. Being one day at the Carmelite Nuns of Pontoise, Praying in their Church, and opening himself in this matter, to a Person to whom with Prudence and Charity he might do it, he thus told him:

It is true, that I have received this morning a grand Favour, in the meditation on the subjection and dependency, which the Son of God was pleased to render to St. Joseph, to whom he was subject and obedient in all things, as a Child to his Father. Oh what an honour and grace was it to this Saint! but Oh, what a Vertue and Self-Annihilation in Jesus Christ! that the Son of God, being equal to his Father, should be subject to a Creature, and submit to a poor Carpenter, as if he had not known how to demean himself? I am given to understand, how by this Example of the Son of God, we are highly Instructed (and after such a manner worthy such a Master) concerning the dependance which the Creatures ought to have upon God, and concerning the strict Obligation which engageth us to submit to the Sovereign Power which he hath over us; and to the direction of men, in such sort, that our heart may not have Repose but in this Subjection, united to that which Christ Jesus renders to a Creature: O how profound is this mystery; and how it teacheth me!

This

This said, he continued a while after without speaking, as if he had been wholly taken up with the greatness of this Grace: and the person to whom he spake, having told him that he felt some communication of this Grace, he fell down on his knees, and so did that person also, and both of them praying, Adored Jesus Christ, in this estate of dependence and submission to a Creature, devoting themselves to him for imitation.

§ 5. His Love of a Private and Retired Life.

WE place also as an effect of his Humility, the Love he had to a private and unknown Life, for he Loved it not only for its affording him more time to attend upon God, and communicate more with our Lord, who was the dear object of his heart: but the more, for having thereby the means, to fly from the Esteem, the Honour, and the Praises of Men, and to be blotted out of their minds, and remain in oblivion to all the World.

Being pressed with this Love, he said, that if God had not tied him to this state, wherein he was, he should have gone into some strange and remote Countrey, to Live there in Obscurity the rest of his days; that he wished not to be known by any one in the World, that it was not expedient that one should know so much, as that he was there, and that it would have been a singular pleasure to him to be Banished from the hearts of all men, and un-
known

known by all the creatures; whereunto he contributed, on his part, all that he could, not doing any thing that might bring on acquaintance, and gain affections; and it was noted, that the more he advanced in light and graces, the more strong grew the Bent he had (plant) to this hidden life and desire to be unknown, as he witnessed five or six months before his death.

He beheld herein our Lord, and the Example that he gave us of this Life, not having appeared for the space of thirty years, but once only in the Temple, although there was no danger on his part, to be frequented by men; and one would think also, he might thereby have done much good, in cultivating, polishing, and sanctifying them, by his conversation, and by his words, being indeed come into the world on purpose to teach them. He cast also his Eyes upon God, whom the Prophet calls a *Secret God*, and who effectually hath kept himself hid a whole Eternity within himself, and who through all the discoveries that he hath made of himself, which is shewed abroad, is nothing near answerable to what is still undiscovered within him. These were the models after which this Servant of God and illuminated Soul, fashion'd himself.

In a Memorial written the fifth of *March*, 1645. which he gave to his Director, to render him an Account of that which passed in his interior, he said:

One time, being in the street where Coaches passed to and fro, and not knowing whether I ought or no, look on them that were in them (because it was in a place of my Acquaintance) and whether this would not give some occasion of Talk,

So see that I went in that manner, not looking at all aside; I had not a sudden upon my spirit, but after a manner that I cannot doubt but is woe of God. Trouble not thy self about being known; and stand not upon knowing. These two words gave me so great light and force, that I stood more than eight days upon this Contemplation. That herein consists the greatest Aile of the Life Spiritual, and I have it daily for a ground.

It is certain, that since the greatest part of our Evils and Imperfections come from a desire to be seen, and to see, this ungodliness must have in it great venom against the Advancement of a Soul, although she often perceives not the damage, nor feels the hurt that come from it. That which defiles our Actions of Piety is, that Self-love makes one glad when they are known and observed; men seek always the most fair and hide the fault, and in that, and all the but, is so char-posed, that she mind is often more taken up about that, about about God. And very few there are, that have not a great part in this vain Eying and Regard, passive and proud, of the Creatures. O how these words wrought in me a great Separation from the world, what purgation and, what purity is it, to be upon the Earth, and there see naught but God. O how (wonderfully) such a one would live, as if he were not known, without caring what the world says or thinks, without desire of taking or receiving any part there, of knowing or being known of any, neither by name, livery or visage, but according as our Lord did: How one would march naked, pure, and free of spirit. I was then in the midst of the Street, and of noise, among crowding and jostling, in such Tranquility, so united to God, and so much taken up by him, as if I had been in a Desert; and since that time I go thus through the Streets, yet with Liberty to look upon what I should see, but without being fixt to it. And these words are again sent into my spirit in necessary occurrences, and they

they keep and conserve me in God, I am for all that very unfaithful to this Grace, but the Centre and the ground of it is not blotted out of me, and this renders me the more culpable.

Thus we have what was in his Memorial: Let us end with what he wrote to a Lady, 1643, upon this Business, of a Life that is secret, and retired from communion with the Creatures, to whom he said:

Let us encourage our selves, to lead this Life unknown, and wholly hid from men, but most known to and intimate with God, divesting our selves, and chasing out of our mind, all those many superfluities, and those many amusements, which bring with them so great a damage, that they take up our minds, instead of God: so that when I consider that, which throws and cuts into so many pieces, this holy, this sweet, and amiable union, which we should have continually with God, it appears that it is only a Monsieur, a Madam, a Compliment, and talking; indeed a meer foolery, which notwithstanding doth ravish and wrest from us the time that is so precious and the fellowship that is so holy and so desirable: Let us quit this, I pray you, and learn to court it with our own Master, let us well understand our part, our own world (as we here Phrase it) not that World I mean, which we do renounce, but that wherein the children of God do their duties to their Father.

CHAP. IV.

Of the dis-esteem he made of the world.

THAT great Affection which he bore to an Obscure Life, was an evident mark of his dis-esteem of the World; for if he had esteemed it, he would not have desired to quit it. Now to say to what height he mounted in the dis-esteem of it, is a thing very difficult: 'Tis enogh for us to know, that he had it in extream Contempt, by observing (as above-said) how he renounced, as far as in him lay, all that the World could promise, and could give him, and wherewith it useth to enslave and captive men, how he degraded him of his Nobility, how he yielded up his Goods, and stript himself of their Property, as no otherwise to use them, than in quality of a Poor Man; withdrew himself from Pleasures, Rejected the Honour and Dignities to which his Birth and Excellent Perfection gave him very great overtures, how he flouted all its Allurements, trampled under foot all its Glories. He beheld for this end, our Lord as his Pattern, who from his Entry into the World and Birth, made an open Profession of an Absolute Contempt of the World; because (as he said) he was not of the World.

I find written by his own hand. in a Memorial which he gave to his Director, this rare and solid Illumination from our Lord in this matter.

Being

Being (saith he) in the Month of November, 1644.
in a Chappel, richly Wainscoted, and Adorned
with very excellent Sculpture, and with Imagery,
beheld it with some attention, having had some
Skill in these things, and saw the bundles of flowers
de Lix, and of flowers in form of borders, and of
very curious Workmanship, it was on a sudden
put into my mind, *The Original of what thou seest*
would not detain thee at all in seeing it. And I per-
ceived, that indeed all these, and those flowers
themselves (and not in Picture) would not have
taken me up; and all the Ornaments which Archi-
tecture and Art inventeth, are but things most
mean and low, running in a manner only upon
Flowers, Fruits, Branches, Harpies, and Chimæra's,
part whereof are in their very being, but things
Common and Vile, and part of them meerly Ima-
ginary; and yet Man who (Croucherh to every
thing) renders himself Amorous, and a Slave of
them; no otherwise, than as if a good workman,
should stand to copy out, and counterfeit some
Trifles and Fopperies. I considered by this sight,
how poor Man was, to be Cheated, Amuled,
and diverted from his Sovereign Good: And since
that time, I could make no more stand to consider
any of these things; and if I did it, I should re-
proach my self for it; as no sooner seeing them
in Churches, or elsewhere, but this is presently
put into my Spirit, *The Original is nothing, the*
Copy and the Image is yet less, each thing is vain,
except the employment of our selves about God alone.

And indeed a Christian that is nurtured and eleva-
ted for so great things, as the possession of God, and
Eternal Glory, ought to undervalue all that which

is here below, yea, how resplendent forever, with much more reason, than a great King will reject a Bottle of Vlay (to which Vlay indeed, the Prophet compares all worldly glories) in comparison of his Crown, and Kingdom. This was the Cause that employed this Servant of God, to animate a Lady to the viltifying of the World, by writing to her in this manner:

I shall tell you, that seeing we are not Christians, but by the life, the dependence, and the life, we have of Jesus Christ, I wonder how it comes about, that a thing so little as man, drawn out of nothing in his first Original, infected with his first Parents Sin, and the addition of his own, raised to so high a degree of honour, as the Alliance of Christianity gives him, in being one only Christ with the Son of God, in being his Brother, and a Co-heir with him in the life to come: I wonder, I say, how, after such admirable Privileges, man can esteem the World, and make any Account of its Vanities? Shall he leave his heart here, and be a man of this World after these Considerations? The things of the Earth, wherewith Death also will quite strip us, and for ever, shall they fill our hearts, in that little time we have to be here, to work out our Salvation, to obtain the Treasures prepared for us, and to render thanks to God for his Mercies? Shall we not make appear to God and Men, a Faith that is altogether lively, in quitting freely the things of this World, as Honours, wealth, riches, not probable, as earthly pleasures, perishable, as opinions, extravagant, and all that, which will pass away like a Dream? Can it be we see our Great Good Father, our good, and there is no more mention of them, as if they were nothing, their commitments and displeasures which did sink so deep in their hearts, and which they had so much pain to accommodate to the Law of

Jesus

Jesus Christ, and to the genius of their times, all this is vanished away. Is it not true, that we have cause to think them to have been out of their Wits, if they considered any other thing but God in their ways? The same thing will happen to us, each thing will pass away, and God alone will abide: O how good is it to be fasten'd to him alone?

He encourageth the same Lady in another Letter, thus:

Courage, all is well, we must dye to the world, and search out the obstacles, that it brings to our perfections; to condemn them; and to live in the world (in the Apostles sense) as not living there at all; possessing it, as not possessing it at all: Let us drive stoutly out of our minds the complacency and affection to our brave houses; let us ruine the delights of our gardens, let us burn our Groves, let us banish those vain images which we have of our Children, hiding secretly in the love of them, that which is but indeed our own self-love (tho' we seem dead to it) and it makes us desire, esteem, and approve in their persons, that which we condemn in our selves; to wit, the Lustre and Glittering of the World.

I know there is a difference of Conditions, but all ought to reject these Entailments (as men account 'em) upon great Birth and Noble Blood: I mean, these principles of aspiring to the highest, and entertaining no sufferings: such Principles as these, our Children carry from that Birth we give them; but it becometh, that the second Birth, which we procure them from Jesus Christ, do repair these disorders: Let us take from them this Vanity of mind, all these stately demeanors, and the Examples of these Grandees in story, whose punishments are as eminent in Hell, as their Persecution hath been Glittering on the Earth; for otherwise it will be found we shall conduct them to no better End.

In another Letter he explains to her, what he had said concerning her houses and Gardens, and which without all the explication, would seem to be very harsh;

‘My design, said he, was not that you should demolish your walls, and let run into a rude wilderness your gardens, to be more at liberty for God: I understand my speech of the disingagements and the rapines which must be made in our minds, and not be executed on things insensible, and which have no worth in them, but in form. When I say, we must set all on fire, my thoughts were of following that admirable spirit of the Apostle, who would that we have poverty among our riches, and divestment in the midst of our possessions; he means, that our spirits be truly purified and separated from the creatures which we really make our solace; because a Christian that tends to perfection, doth himself great wrong in dwelling upon these amusements, and entertaining in his heart other inclinations than those of Jesus Christ who saw all the world without destroying it; but withal, without applying himself to it; the business of his Father, and his glory, was his life; the windings of rivers and the ornaments of fields, were to him but things of feeble consideration, and not matters of employment. Hither it is that I would have one come, and desire no more.

It is, in effect, thus, That we must contemn the world; whereunto God carries us, and to bring us thither more efficaciously, he permits by turns, and often that we receive therein disgraces, and meet with pain and trouble; as when a man sets thorns in a way,

to make men take another : The which Monsieur de Renty knowing very well, see what he writes thereof to a certain person :

‘ God hath his ends through all these contrarieties ;
‘ which is, that those that are his, should be yet more
‘ his, in affiance, in recumbency, in life, and in all :
‘ The bruit of the world, and its turning upside down
‘ are advantageous, to make known its spirit, its confusi-
‘ on, its vanity, to them that are not of it, and who
‘ being in the spirit of death wait for nothing more
‘ there, than for death ; bringing forth in the mean
‘ while, the effects of life eternal, which is a kinde of
‘ advancement out of mortality, whilst we are in it.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of his Patience.

Questionless the Humble man is Patient, because he esteems himself worthy of the Evil he suffers, and of much more also: And if we will search into the true Cause of our Impatience, and drive up to the spring-head, we shall find it to be Pride, and the Esteem of our selves. Monsieur Remy being most Humble, as we have seen, was also by consequence most Patient, as this Chapter is going to relate.

And now at first, when I am thinking of it, there comes into my mind, the Description that *Tertullian* makes of Patience, representing Her with a Visage Sweet and Calm, a Forehead Serene, without any shew of Frowning or Sadness; a Carriage always equal, few Words, and a Countenance such as one sees in Persons Innocent and Assured. Now they that knew him, will say, that this is the very portraiture of him in his Native Colours, as being the very Image of Patience to the Life, having all these qualities in a very high degree. He had also many other interior qualities necessary for this Vertue; for those now mentioned concern only the exterior.

Persons that had lived a very long time with him, and had studied with care all his Actions, never heard him complain for any thing whatsoever, neither for Sickness, nor loss, nor in any other occasion of sufferance; but they always observed in him

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a Constancy immoveable, a Patience invincible, and which passed often into Joy, with an Evenness so great and so marvellous, that he spoke not one word higher than another, nor used any gesture, which might argue a spirit over eager and forward.

In his second journey to Dijon (which he made with the Lady his Wife, and the late deceased Countess of Chabres) the second or third day, he was assailed with a violent Rheumatism, which put him into pain all over his body, and being to lie down in bed, as need was, he went thither quite stooping, supported by a staff, and by a person that led him: In this Voyage he suffered extreme pain, without saying ever a word, or making the least Complaint: These Ladies perceived it, seeing him grow wan and pale as a Clout, and afterwards in a moment all on fire, and although they told him, that surely he was very ill, he answered nothing to it, nor embraced the Ease ment of talking of his Grief, which naturally the Sick desires; but entertained them with Discourses of the excessive Dolours of Jesus Christ, and what a Favour it was from God, when a Soul suffers for him; but in terms so full of sweetness, and with so much of love and zeal, that the Company was affected with great Devotion in hearing him.

These two Ladies not able to get out of him, what his Pain was, and desiring much to know it, they Requested the Priores of the Carmelites of Dijon (supposing she might have more power with him than themselves) to ask him concerning it; which she did. To whom he Answered plainly:

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‘My pains are great, even to crying out, and swooning; but although I feel them in the greatest extremity, yet through God grace, I yeild not up my self to them, but to him.

He told her moreover, that being led into his Chappel of *Citry*, and set down upon a bench, by reason of his sickness, the bench, broke, without any appearance at all to him, that such a thing could happen, and that he believed, the evil spirit had broken it, to move him to impatience, making him to fall unwardly:

‘But by the mercy of God, I was no more moved thereat, *said he*, than you see me now, although the pains that surprized me were very sharp.

A man had need have great command of himself, and be very patient, to be able in like occasions, not to be moved at all, and to keep himself in the same posture of spirit, as if nothing had hapned.

I had the favour, *said this good mother*, to be with him about two hours, while he was exercised with these great torments, which I saw him bear with much calmness and modesty, without stirring at all, and talking just no otherwise, than if in going out of the Speak-house, he had been in perfect health, whereas, God knows he was in great pain, resting upon a staff, and going twofold: All our Nunnery was much afflicted to see him in this condition; and it was the motion of some, to make a vow for his health to the Lady of Grace (whose Image here they honour) believing, that the Mother of God, would not deny them it, both for the veneration that this servant of
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God rendred to this Image, as also for the great obligations our house had to him. The whole Society made the vow upon the day of her Nativity, after Mass, whereat *Monsieur de Renty* was present, but, by no means, being able to kneel. The vow was accepted; for after that Night he came without staff into the Parlour, and a few days after, he could kneel down, and was grown well in the nine days of the Vows continuance: They keep the staff in the Cover in devotion and memory of this grace; and he in acknowledgement of the benefit received, sent a Heart of Chrystal in a Case of Gold, to hang about the Neck of the Virgin.

Having lost a Son whom he dearly loved, he endured this Sharp Affliction without saying a word, save only in testifying his perfect submission to the Orders of God, and with so much patience as might justly render it an Action Heroical.

Often had he great exercise of Patience in the works of Charity, which he rendred to his Neighbour, not only enduring Hunger, Thirst, Heat, Cold, Wet, Weariness of Body, and other outward Pains, inseparable Attendants on the Employments he had, but also Contempts and Reproaches.

While he was employed on certain set days in an Hospital, in Catechising poor Passengers, a certain man that was there settled, was offended at this action of Humility and Signal Charity, in a Person of that condition, looking upon it, as an Encroachment and intrusion upon his Office, and came to find him out, as he was in the midst of the Poor, instructing them, and gave him, in their hearing, divers Injurious and offensive words, to discourage him from

from coming again. Monsieur de Remy seeing this man take on so against him, heard him without being moved, and patiently enduring his contempt and outrages; after all, makes Answer with much Humility and Respect, that he desired to reach those poor people, which he saw to have great need of it; that he was not willing to come on any such days, as he would take, but seeing that he would not be at the pains himself, he prayed him not to hinder a good work. This did not satisfy the man at all, but he comes four days together into the Hospital, to drive out Monsieur de Remy, as soon as he began the Catechism, doing it instead of him; which this most Courteous Nobleman endured all the time, with an admirable patience.

He practised this Vertue with great Care and Conduct, through all the things of this Life, whereof there is not any but will give occasion of patience; so that whatsoever happen'd, general or particular, though it check'd and jostled his Nature, his Body, Spirit, Judgement, Will, Inclinations, Desires, Designs, and those of the best sort, every thing that concerned him in what way soever, he endeavoured to improve it towards Grace and Perfection, and possess his Soul in Patience and Tranquillity, receiving and suffering all without any alteration, or being either exalted or dejected by them.

Praying to God before the Holy Sacrament (saith he, in a Memorial under his own hand) a poor man came to me to Beg an Alms, at that time I applied my self to recollection, when men use to receive such interruptions with some contradiction; and the word it self implies as much, for we call it, The importunity of the Poor: It was given me in this instant

instant to understand, that if we were well inlightened, we should not count our selves importuned, or bindred by any person or thing; because we should regard the order of God, conducting all things to our advantage; that as it becoms us to suffer with Patience the distractions interior, so ought we to endure the exterior, and that the vexation, uneasiness, and impatience, which these little accidents cause in us, come from our ignorance and immortification.

It is not for all that though, but we may shun the occasions of trouble: but when they come, we must look upon them as ordered by God, receive and bear them with all sweetness, humility and reverence; and so though they come and interrupt us, the order of God is not interrupted in us, but we follow it; and this indeed is the treasure, and the great secret of the life spiritual, and (I may so say) a Paradise upon earth.

True it is, that nothing troubles us, but through our own fault, and all the vexations which we either resent within or vent outwards, when any one crosses, binders or drives us from doing any thing, have no other source, but the disorders of our too much engaged spirits. And for the better stifling of these passionate risings, and keeping our hearts in peace, we must mark this well: that if one binders us from doing one good work, he thereby gives us the means of practising another. A man (suppose) draws you away from prayer, or from reading, binders you from the execution of some good design you have for your neighbour: It is true but he puts you withal into a condition of exercising patience, which in this conjuncture, will be better, more acceptable to God and more efficacious to perfectiate you, than all those other things; for in them there was found your own will, but in these, there comes in a Self-alongation, where consists your perfection: for the fullness of God is not; but in the emptiness of the creature.

§ 1. *A pursuit of the same subject.*

THis great Patience in Monsieur de Remy, did flow from the high Esteem he made of Sufferings which if well understood, are no other than Wellsprings of Life-Eternal, than Mines of Gold, Celestial Riches, than Participations of the Cross of our Lord, which Cross God hath appointed the Cause of our Happiness, and of all the Good that we shall ever possess; and consequently whereunto every one must have some Ligament or Nail to affix him who will be Saved.

To one that suffered, he wrote thus:

‘God fashions you for himself, uniting you here below to Jesus Christ’s Sufferings: Ah! what a great Favour is it! and greater than we are aware of.

And to another:

‘What a Blessing is it that God makes you suffer whilst the World Laughs! if those of the contrary part had (as you have) their Eyes open, they would see a Ravishing wonder, your self to laugh in Suffering, and themselves to weep for not suffering: you have a favour which they contemn, because they understand it not, and poor miserable men, they count themselves happy in what is their misery.

This great Opinion which he had conceived of Suffering

sufferings made him desire and thirst after them, and to lay in the ardor of his wish, with that holy woman (to whom he bear so great devotion) either to dye, or to suffer. He wrote to one thus:

I see that in a manner, every thing is unprofitable in this Life, but to suffer; every consolation, every sweetness and joy is an overhasty seizure of the recompence which is not due to Criminals, who sojourn not in this world, but to be purged, and do penance there; to which business, pleasures and joys bring some alloy, and hinder, without doubt, the penance from being so full, and the Soul from arriving to a higher degree of Perfection: Not that I deny, but that these things may sometimes be necessary, in regard of our infirmity; which hath need to be upheld, for the better enduring its mortifications.

In the Year 1647. April, 30. he wrote thus to his Director:

I have always before my Eyes my feebleness, and that little which I render to God for his favours, which keeps me in abnegation; but yet with great assurance, which carries me to love, to docility, and to obedience; but love and obedience that inflames me more to suffer with our Lord: This is my greatest longing and attractive; because in every other thing we are receivers from God; but in this here (although we receive the Grace to suffer) yet the suffering is that which we can properly give to God, and is the greatest gage and proof of our Love.

But it is not for all this reasoning aforesaid; that I should abuse and bring sufferings upon me, but I feel my self inwardly inclined towards it, and stay there. It is about a fortnight since that I had such a kind of Acknowledgement, and such a Love to our Lord, suffering and offering himself to God his Father, and knitting us to himself to be but one and the same Sacrifice, that I felt my self in an instant, and during

that instant, glued to the Cross by such an alliance of Love, it is inexplicable, and whereof the virtue continues with me to this present.

In a Memorial that he gave him the Year, 1648 in Lent, concerning his Dispositions: he said,

It is come into my mind, that the way to make me keep hard Lent, would be to set me at a good Table, and oblige me to make good cheer, to cast me among the brave Companions of the World, to prattle and laugh, and to lead me in walks and meetings of young Gallantry; for this would be to me a little Hell; yea (without speaking of the Sin that might be there) the very thought of it makes me tremble for it is true, that Solitude, Fastings, and other things which are called Penances, are my Attractives or Allurements.

And afterward, he very wisely adds:

Although I have this feeling, I cease not to know what I am, and in all my inclinations and desires, I take heed not to beg to suffer the least thing; and when I happen to do of my self, I revoke it afterwards, as having done foolishly. I have too much experience of my weakness; I give my self only to my God, for every thing he desires of me, from the top of Heaven, even to the bottom of Hell; by his Order I will all, with him I can do all, and that which is ordered by him, is always accompanied with his grace.

This great Servant of God inlightned and touched with these illuminations and contemplations, stirred up to Patience all those he dealt with, and perswaded them to knit and unite themselves intimately to our Lord suffering and crucified. He wrote thus to one afflicted:

I beseech our Lord to fortifie you more and more with his graces; and that the more he imprints in you the Character of his Passion, the more he may make you grow in the benefit of your Suffering, to accomplish perfectly in your passion.

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what St. Paul saith, *Abſit mihi gloriari niſi in cruce Domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti,* (God forbid that I ſhould glory in any thing, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.) I aſſure you, it is a great ſhame to a Chriſtian to paſs his days in this World, more at eaſe than Jeſus Chriſt here paſſed his. Ah! had we but a little Faith, what reſiſtance could we take out of the Croſs.

But if all have not this grace, how much ought they to whom it is given, to cheriſh it, ſeeing it is a mark of the high degree of Glory, that they one day ſhall poſſeſs: for who doubts, but that in proportion, as we ſhall be conformed to the Death of the Son of God, and to his Pain, we ſhall in the ſame degree, be to his Glory, and receive the recompence thereof in Bleſſing.

And afterwards teaching him the way of well ſuffering, he gives him this Advice, which contains all the Secret.

But the Beauty of Suffering is in the interior, in the holy diſpoſitions of Jeſus Chriſt, who is (and it is a thing to be well marked, and always ſtudied) as well the model as the head of all Sufferers.

And to another, out of the ſame thought, he ſaid :

It is a great favour to ſuffer : All the world's deceiv'd, ſuppoſing this a common favour, it is very rare : It is true, we may ſay that many ſuffer, but of them there are very few, that ſuffer in the diſpoſitions of Jeſus Chriſt : very few, which ſuffer with a perfect reſignment to what God ordains concerning them ; very few, without ſome inquietude, and dwelling in their thoughts upon their preſſures ; few that give up all events to the Conduct of God, without making reflection thereupon, for to employ themſelves entirely in his praiſe, and to give way, by our acquieſcence and ſubmiſſion,

for him to Exercise all his Rights and Power over us.

He fortifies and encourageth in this sort, a Lady much in pain.

Few understand the Secret of Christianity; many call themselves Christians, and few have the Spirit thereof: many in their Prayers and ordinary Affairs, look up to Heaven, but in their important Actions, they are Children of Nature, not looking but on the Earth, whence if they lift up their Eyes to Heaven, it is but to complain, and pray him to condescend to their desires, and not to shew their acceptance of his: They give some small things to God, but will retain those which their Love ties them to; and if he separates them from them, it is a violence, and a dis-membring which he must make, and to which they cannot consent; as though the Life of Christians were not a Life of Sacrifice, and an Imitation of Jesus Christ Crucified.

God who knows our wretchedness, takes from us for our greater good, the cause of our Evil, a Parent, a Child, a Husband, that he may by another Evil, which is Affliction, draw us to himself, and make us see that all these Alliances and Connexions to whatsoever it be, that separates us from him, are so many obstacles, and of so great importance, that one day, in the face of all the Creatures, we shall confess that the greatest mercy that he ever did us, was to free us of them: It is a worm-wood bitter only to the mouth and tast, but wholesome to the heart; kills the old Adam, to make alive in us Jesus Christ; it is a great winter, which is the assurance of the beauty of the other seasons: But we must beware, that what is given us out of favour, we take not as a thing by chance.

‘chance, or a misfortune; for this would be to turn
‘the Remedy into Poyson, and to receive the Grace
‘to chase it away.

‘Let us enter into the holy and adorable disposition,
‘which was always in Jesus Christ, to suffer willingly,
‘for the honour of his Father, and for our Salvation. Is
‘not this a strange thing, that men knowing, that
‘the way which Jesus Christ past thorow to glory, was
‘Ignominy, Pain, and the Cross, yet they that call
‘themselves his Disciples and Followers, should expect,
‘and beg of him for themselves another way to walk
‘in? Is the Disciple greater than the Master? and if the
‘Head willingly passed that way, what remains for
‘the Members? ought not they to follow him? Let us
‘therefore go after him, and suffer after his Model:
‘Blessed be sickness, the loss of honour, of riches, of
‘goods, and of the nearest things, and the separation
‘from all Creatures, which hold us bowed towards the
‘Earth, if it set us streight, and make us lift up our
‘Eyes to Heaven, and to enter into the designs that
‘God hath over us: Blessed be the Plague, the War,
‘and the Famine, and generally all the scourges of
‘God which produce these Effects of Grace and Salva-
‘tion to us.

I conclude in these words which he sent to another
Person:

‘While we live here, it is our season of Patience,
‘where Faith and Hope would be unprofitable, if
‘all were clear, and nothing caused us to Suffer: it is
‘in the obscurity of this desertion, and in all the sorts
‘of Tryals, as well from within as without, that
‘those Vertues are established in our Souls, and that
‘they make us hope well of our Salvation.

§ 2. His Domestick Crosses.

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THE greatest exercise and patience that Monsieur Kemy ever had in all his Life, was that which was given him by the Lady his Mother; who, whether she were Angry that he was so forward in Devotion, always among Prisons, always among Hospitals, always employed in actions low and abject in the Eyes of the world, far beneath, as she thought his Birth, and that she should have been glad to see him in glistering and glorious Employments, which his Ancestors had appear'd: or were it, that she was pushed thereto by some Evil Counsel, or other ways, it was, that she gave him (and for a long time) matter of Suffering; and one may say, that as she contributed much to the making him a man, so he contributed much to the making him a perfect Christian. The Case was thus, The Lady pretending to great Rights in the Goods which her deceased Husband had bequeathed to her Son, did demand the sum of him; who with great submission and respect, gave her all that he believed was her due, and over and above but she not content therewith, demanded more, which her son finding, by advice of learned Council that it could not be done without wrong to his children, did remit the business to Arbitrators, and agreed for the satisfaction of his mother, that she should choose them all, as she pleased, persons of ability and honesty, of her acquaintance, and such as he knew not at all, to determine what he might give her, without prejudice to his conscience: When they were chosen, he went to finde them out, and prayed them to con-

rent the Lady his mother in every thing, that might lawfully be done, without having regard to him, which was a request altogether extraordinary, made to Judges, by one of the parties, and which well makes appear, the affections and the honour which Monsieur de Renty bore to his mother and how far he was from seeking his own interest.

The day being come wherein these Gentlemen were to give their sentence: whilst they were employed in the framing of it, the said Lady was in one chamber of the house, and her son, with Madam his Lady, and a Gentlewoman, in another, where the employment of her most vertuous son was, to pray to God for a success of the business, to his glory, and the procurement of peace; and for this end, he caused them to say with him some hymns, till the time that there was brought him the award, to sign it; which was read to him, and which he heard with great calmness of spirit; and although it was not advantageous to him, and that there was a notable forfeiture on them that should not stand to it, he signed it without dispute, or endeavour, to get better terms.

Upon this, believing that his mother would be fully satisfied, with what had been decreed, when he returned to his lodging, he caused to be sung *Te Deum Laudamus*, beginning it first himself, and from his heart in way of thanksgiving for this conclusion, which he supposed would be a bond of peace between his mother and him, and a means of living happily with her, the rest of his days: But God (to purifie and refine him yet more, and to lay a cross upon his shoulders, which he bore divers years in a most holy disposition) permits, that the thing should not take effect, according to his desire; because his mother not

accounting herself satisfied with this advantage which these Arbitrators had given her, found out a way to appeal from the award, yet without being obliged to pay the forfeiture for refusal, and to sue him for her pretended right, at the Parliament of *Dijon*. Her son did all that was possible for him, to make her alter this design, and to sweeten her heart towards him; and, for the bringing of this about, he had recourse to remedies supernatural; he made long prayers, and joyning penance thereto; he fasted with extraordinary rigour, and macerated his body with great austerities, hoping God would have regard to these actions, and to the sincerity of his intentions.

After he had thus prepared himself for sometime, he went to his mother, and cast himself on his knees before her, with a reverence, humility, and submission able to mollifie the most obdurate heart; the which thing he did, not for once onely, but often, and with abundance of tears; and begg'd of her with the most efficacious words that he could make use of, that she would be pleased to take him and all his family unto her, and entertain them as she thought meet; and after that, she might dispose as she pleased of all the goods that his father had left him.

She would not consent to this humble and reasonable request, but persisted in her resolution to go to *Dijon*, and sue him there; which he perceiving, though he might, by an expedient presented to him, have crost that, and never stirr'd out of *Paris*, yet out of respect to her, and to comply with her in this business, would not make use of it, but determined to go thither, and did so.

And this he did, out of a disposition to confusion and debasement; which indeed he met with to purpose finding

finding mens minds, prejudiced against him, with a persuasion of great injury, for one that made profession of so high piety, to deal so with his Mother, which he endured, that he might be partaker of the reproaches, and honour the self-abatement of the Son of God, who came into the world for our sakes, in the similitude of sinful flesh, and appeared as a criminal, although he was Innocence itself: And so passed he here, for a guilty person in this business, though he was not at all in fault; but on the contrary, exercised therein, actions of Heroical vertue, of which you shall now see some of them.

A person of piety, and Superiour of a Religious House, acquainting him with all the evil and strange reports which are spread abroad of him in *Dijon*, where none were to justify him being a meer stranger there; he heard it all without any sign of passion, but with admirable calmness elevated himself to God in heart and words, and humbled himself before him; whereat she was much edified. She demanded, after this, whether there had been put in, any injurious papers against his mother, as was reported. He answered, No; though Proctors and Advocates sometimes say more than one would have them, yet that he had seen all the writings, and found them all drawn with that respect, which was due to a Mother.

She ask'd him also, if he was not afflicted at her manner of proceeding against him, seeming very harsh and extraordinary.

He said, No, because I so much adore the order of God over me, that I cannot be afflicted at that which he permits to befall me: I am a great sinner, and therefore not only my mother, but all the world have just cause to take part against me. In

In brief, he was never heard to make any Complaint of hard usage from his Mother, but continually laid the blame upon his Sins.

The same person adds in a Memorial, how that divers seeking out ways of Accord, had the greatest trouble in the world to make her joyn in it, every day inventing new difficulties, even when it was believed that all had been given her, whatsoever she desired; and that in the midst of these delays from day to day, her self said to Monsieur Renty, Sir, I shall willingly say the *Te Deum*, when once I hear your business ended: And one day, when they believed Articles would have been signed, without retracting (on which day notwithstanding, all was broken off) he came with a pleasant Countenance, to desire her to say the *Te Deum*.

It is now the time to say the Te Deum said he, since you had the goodness to promise it: And may I be so bold as to desire to say it with you? O what a great and wise God have we! who knows well how to do all things as they ought, and when they ought; not according to our precipitations, but to his Order, which is our Sanctification.

Hereupon he said the *Te Deum*, with a Spirit so elevated to God, as gave sufficient evidence of his being wholly filled with him.

And afterward said:

It is well, though nothing be done, yet it was very meet to say the Te Deum, to render thanks to God, for that he hath done his own Will, and not that of a Sinner, unworthy to be heard or regarded.

This Action filled me with admiration (wrote this Person), and so much the more, because the business was believed to be broken, without hopes of making up again. And I no less admired his silence,
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in a business that touched him so near, in that he never spake word to me of it, nor of his Mother, save only to desire, that they both might be recommended to God : And from the beginning, that I had the honour to speak to him, when I gave him Notice of the offers that divers persons had made us to serve him, he thank't me most heartily for my good will (with great Acknowledgment towards those persons) and without speaking any more thereof, he fell upon discoursing of God ; never after opening his mouth about that business, which evidenced a wonderful disengagement, and death to every thing, who of never so sensible an interest.

There past also many other things at *Dijon*, and since at *Paris*, during these differences, even to the death of his Mother ; yea, and after, which required an extream deal of Patience, and which he practised in an Heroical Perfection, even to the Astonishment of those who were Acquainted with the Business.

But it is enough, of this matter we have spoken sufficiently, and I doubt not, *Monsieur de Renty* who is now (as his Eminent Vertues give us sufficient ground to believe) in the Place of perfect Charity, both approve of my design, in not speaking more thereof, and of using reservedness towards that Lady, to whom all his Life, he bore so much Love and Respect.

CHAP. VI.

Of his Mortification.

q.? **W**HAT we have spoken hitherto in this Second Part of the Austerities, of the Poverty, Humility and Patience of Monsieur de Renty, makes appear evidently, to what height he was mortified, and that he was a true grain of that mysterious wheat mentioned by our Saviour, which by dying, brings forth much fruit; yet besides all this, we shall touch here some other effects of his Mortification.

The grand Secret of Christian-Life, consists in the destruction of what our Nature hath in it vitious, the better to give way to grace, in crucifying the old man, that Jesus Christ may live there, who hath taught, us, that this is not acquired but by continual Mortification; and to that end, hath told us, that if any Man doth not take up his Cross, and that daily, he cannot be my disciple.

— This excellent Scholar of that great Master, having well learnt his Lesson, employed all his Care in the beginning of his Conversion, to mortifie himself in every thing, to subdue his Passions, to regulate his motions interior and exterior, to annihilate his desires, and to dye to all the inclinations of corrupt nature, with so great faithfulness and constancy, that as soon as he perceived her to carry him to any thing with some imperfection, and that his natural will enclined one way, he did the quite contrary: And he told an intimate person, that having under-

undertaken the endeavour to oppose his Nature in each thing, by the Grace of God, he had always surmounted it; insomuch, that in all things he proceeded with a spirit of death, and continual Sacrifice, making no further use of his Passions, Senses, nor of any thing in him, but with an Eye always open, to hinder the operations of malign Nature, and whatever she brought thereto of her own, following the Conduct of our Lord, saying that a man must disengage himself from himself, and every Creature, that God only may be his object.

And accordingly he performed it exactly; for when in his Sickness he endured most sharp pains, he was so taken up with God, and abstracted from them, that he thought not of them. It was impossible to find a man more reserved, in speaking of that which troubled him than he: For as he knew, that Nature is apt to seek and comfort it self, in discouraging of that which hurts her, so he deprived her of that satisfaction and content, lifting up in the mean while his heart to God, and offering him his pain, without otherwise dwelling upon it; being glad that Gods work went forward, that the body of sin was in destroying, and his Sacrifice advancing.

He that is baptised (said he) ought to be dead in Jesus Christ, and to lead a life of suffering, and in this suffering, of application to God, let us march on to our end, which is sacrifice in each thing, in the manner that God will have it, upon the bottom of obedience to his orders, and of the annihilation of our selves, in the imitation, and by the spirit of Jesus Christ: Let us be so many Victims, entertained, and taken up with these Interior dispositions and sentiments, that Christ had from his conception to his death, and to the last period of his offering &c.

Hence

Hence it was he had often in his mouth these words, *Sacrifice, Union*, minding to say thus, that we ought to study to enforce our selves to dye in each thing to our selves; and for the attaining thereof to sacrifice to God our spirit, our judgment, our will, our thoughts, our affections, our desires, our passions, and all in the union, and after the manner of Jesus Christ.

In these apprehensions, he wrote to a person, that he had great devotion to these words, which the 24 Elders sang in the *Revelations*, to the Lamb, which is our Lord, prostrate before this Throne, *Thou hast made us Kings and Priests, and we shall reign upon the earth*: In that this divine Lamb causeth that God establisheth his Kingdom in us, by reigning in our souls, and in our bodies, by his grace, that we are Priests, to offer up our selves to him in sacrifice; and that by this means we shall reign for ever with him, in the land of the living: So that this excellent man, in all occasions where it behoved him to deny something to his nature, and to dye to himself, cast his eyes upon this estate of sacrifice and of victime, to offer up himself to the glory of God, by the pattern of his Son our Lord.

This great and continual care which he had to mortifie himself in each thing, brought about, that he had so tamed his passions, so regulated the motions of his soul and body, so changed his inclinations, and subdued his nature, that at length he came to such a point of Mortification, passive, and of death, that he felt no more in the spirit any opposition to any thing painful, and was not mortified with any thing whatsoever: From thence came it, that writing to his Director, concerning his disposition, he said,

said, that he understood not that which they call Mortification; because that where there is no contradiction nor resistance, there is no mortification; and when there befall any thing of a much mortifying nature, and would have touch'd him much, if he had been as yet alive to himself, if any familiar person spake to him of the pain thereof; he said smiling; that the thing went well, and that we must gain upon our selves, that nothing may mortifie us any more, and that we be, as it were, insensible to each thing.

He came to this pass, not by the goodness of his nature, nor by a kind of stupid indifferency, which sometimes is found in certain sleepy spirits, but by his Labour and Vertue, which had made this blessed work in him, and had changed his Nature; for they that knew his Youth, report, that he naturally he was of a swelling, hasty, haughty, and jeering disposition; which he had so corrected, or to say better, annihilated, that in truth it was admirable, inso-much that he was become moderate, staid, patient, humble, and respectful, in a degree of consummate perfection: So that if we consider him well, a man may say, that he was of a disposition quite contrary, and diametrically opposite to that which he brought from his Mothers Womb; teaching us by an Example, so assured and illustrious, that a man may prevail much over himself, if he endeavour it sincerely, and that, whatever Vice he hath, he may at last rid himself of it, if he force himself; according to those words of our Lord, *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.*

And

And therefore, he recommended in a special manner this holy courage, and the necessity of self-enforcement; as being that by which we may measure what profit we have made in true vertue, and a means also absolutely necessary for the gaining of perfection. He wrote to a person that practised devotion, thus:

O how much to be feared is it, that we cheat our selves with the name and the appearances of devotion, relying much on our exercises of piety; which, it may be, are barely performed, and in speculation only, never coming to the practise, nor to the conquest over our selves. In the morning we worship Jesus Christ, as our Master and Director, and yet our life all the day following, is not directed by him; we look upon him as our pattern, and imitate him not; we take him for our rule and guide of our Affections, and yet we do not Sacrifice to him our Appetites; we make him the Model of our Conversation, which yet is never the more Holy; we Promise him to Labour and get above our selves, but its no more than imagination. The truth is, that if we know not our devotion, rather by the violence and enforcement we make upon our selves, and the amendment of our manners, than by the multiplication and simple usage of spiritual exercises, it is to be feared they will be rather practises of Condemnation, than of Sanctification. For after all to what purpose all this, if the work follow not? if we change not our selves, and destroy not that which is vitious in our nature? It is no otherwise, but as if a builder should pile together many materials towards making of a brave Edifice, and yet never begin it. And yet we see the work of Jesus Christ is almost reduced to this pass, amongst the spiritual persons of these times.

He said to another, that the love which a Christian Soul was obliged to bare to the vertues which

Jesus Christ hath taught us; ought not to end in the simple sentiments of Esteem and Respect toward them; whereby Souls of the common sort are easily perswaded, that they have done their duty; but therein they deceive themselves, for that our Lord's Will is undoubtedly, that they make a further entry into the Solidity of his divine Practices, especially in Mortification, Patience, Poverty, and Renouncement of our selves; and that this is the Cause why there are so few Souls truly Christian, and solidly spiritual; yea even sometimes among the Religious, was this, that men contented themselves to make a stand at this first step.

I will end this Chapter, and this Second Part, with a Letter which he writ to his Director, who had thought it fit for him to visit a person that had great need of Succour and Instruction for some spiritual dispositions, which he performed with much success and benediction.

This Letter dated the 14. of *May*, in the Year 1647. will make us well see the great disengagement that he had from himself, and his perfect Mortification attended with gifts inestimable, and his great light whereby he clears and explicates matters of great subtilty: The tenour is as followeth:

' For the Person whom you know, and the Visit
' I made him, it is God and your direction that
' hath done all: I am so much afraid to mingle there-
' in any thing of mine, that going to the place where
' he is, yet I perceive I shall not visit him, without
' a new Order from you, or that he much desire it:
' I have not since that time, so much as sent any
' commendations to him, considering with my self,
' that we must keep the man reserved, and in great
I sobriety:

‘sobriety: And I thought it fit to cast all this upon
‘you, as my Guide in the business. Ha Father, the
‘great imperfection of Souls, is the not waiting enough
‘on God, the natural disposition struggling, and not
‘brought into subjection, comes in with fine pretexts,
‘and thinks to do wonders; and in the mean while
‘it is that which sullies the purity of the Soul, that
‘which troubles its silence, and turns aside its sight
‘from Faith, from Affiance, and from Love; whence
‘it hapneth, that the Father of Lights expresseth not
‘in us his Eternal Word, nor produceth in us his
‘Spirit of Love.

‘The Incarnation hath merited all, not only for
‘the abolition of our Faults, but also for all the dis-
‘positions of Grace, whereunto Jesus Christ is
‘minded to Associate us; of which this is the princi-
‘pal (and was in him so far as he was man) to do
‘nothing our selves, but to speak and act according
‘as we receive, knowing that we alone are not to do
‘the work; but that the holy Spirit, which is the
‘Spirit of Jesus, and which govern’d him in all his
‘ways, is within us; which would stamp upon us his
‘impressions, and give us the Life, the Life real and
‘experimental of our Faith, if ballasted and held
‘back by Patience, we would but wait his Operation.
‘This is it in which I feel my Infirmitie, and yet
‘whither I find a great attractive: I see that which I
‘cannot utter, for I possess that which I cannot express.
‘And the Cause (Father) why I am so brief, comes
‘both from Ignorance, as also from a great large-
‘ness of the Divine Goodness, which works in me
‘that which I cannot utter. The effect of this is, a
‘fulness and a satiating of the Truth and clearness of
‘the Magnificence of God, of the greatness of Jesus
‘Christ,

‘*Christ*, and of the riches which we have in him ; of
‘the most holy Virgin, and of the Saints ; one sees
‘here all Praise and Adoration, and contemplates
‘them within. I tell you here of many things me
‘seems, and yet all this is done with one draught so
‘simple and so strong in the superiour part of the
‘Spirit, that I am nothing diverted from it by any
‘exteriour employments : I see all, I understand all,
‘and I do (though it be ill) all, that I have to do.
‘This is that I present you with, to receive from you
‘Instruction and Correction.

Thus we see the admirable benefits that come from
perfect Mortification, and the delicious fruits that are
produced from this mysterious grain of Wheat when
it is dead.

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of the two is the only one
 which is not a member of the first
 class. The third of the two is the
 only one which is not a member of
 the second class. The fourth of the
 two is the only one which is not a
 member of the third class. The fifth
 of the two is the only one which is
 not a member of the fourth class.

THE
HOLY LIFE
OF
Monsieur DE RENTY, &c.

PART III.

CHAP. I.

*His application to our Lord Jesus Christ,
in regard of his Neighbour.*

WE have observed in the First Part of this History, that the grand Exercise of Monsieur *Renty* was to apply and unite himself to our Saviour, and from that union, and his example, to derive all his Vertues and Good Works: This was the general course he held in them all, to mould himself after him, for the composition of his Exterior and Interior, never taking his Eye off this Divine Copy, but endeavouring to

draw each Line exactly, and pensil his true Lineaments, making him his native and perfect Original.

This was the Scope of all his Designs and Cares, and particularly of his Charity to his Neighbour; for which he propounded our Saviour as his grand Exemplar, marking what he had done, and what he had suffered for men, weighing those Affections and Tenderesses he bore towards them; how he sought after, and conversed with them; how he instructed, comforted, and encouraged them, sometimes Reproving, otherwhiles Bearing with their Infirmitie, and at all times carrying them in his most dear embraces, and most intimate inclosure of his heart.

He pondred what he had delivered concerning this vertue of charity, that it was it, that he had established as the ground and perfection of his new Law; having left us this one command more expressly, which with special propriety he had termed his own, and the execution whereof he had enforced above all other: he much thought upon it, how that this master had charged us to love our neighbour, according to the model, measure and fashion, that he had loved us: And finally, that he had made this vertue, and no other, the distinctive character betwixt such as possessed his spirit in truth, and those that had it only in appearance.

Wherefore having well-weighed these actions and doctrines of our Saviour, and resolved to do his utmost, to render himself a good Christian, and his perfect Imitator, he determined as far as he could, both to embrace this doctrine, and follow his actions, and to love his neighbour with the bent and spirit of of such a divine Master.

Writing to Sister Margueret, a Carmelite of Beaulieu, he said;

I sigh

I sigh after my Saviour Jesus, desiring to imitate and follow him whither he pleaseth: I beseech you by your prayers, obtain for me his Spirit, to be my life, my whole-life: sigh and groan for me after my God, that I may be wholly for him, in his Son, that I may follow him, and not live, but by his spirit,

And to another person, he writ thus:

I have so great a view of the love, and of all the effects of the love of the most Holy Soul of our Lord, that this Interior, so full of clemency, bounty, and charity, makes me conceive far otherwise than ever, how that we ought to live of this Divine love even in our deportment towards men, and how in effect, it is in him, that the whole Law is accomplished in its perfection.

Furthermore to the same party, thus:

Since God hath manifested himself ~~for~~ us ~~by~~ his Son, and hath admitted us, through him, into his grace, and made us partakers of all his actions, both towards God and man, how can we ever quit this his dear Son? He that hath Jesus Christ, hath a key which opens many doors, it discovers unto us large prospects, it enricheth us with vast treasures, and breaks open the prison of mans heart, as being too strait for his Immensities.

And to the same thus also:

Ah, how good is that desert! when after baptism we are conducted thither with our Lord, by the Spirit of God: Thence it was that our Saviour came out to converse with men, to teach them, and work their salvation: Since therefore we, together with him, make up but one Jesus Christ, as having the honour to be his members, we should live his life, take on us his Spirit, and walk in his steps.

This was the ground that made this perfect Disciple apply himself with all his power to this admirable

Charity, which we are now coming to speak of at large, endeavouring in all the commerce he had with men, to unite himself most intimately to our Saviour, rendring himself up as an instrument to be guided by his hand in the helping of others: beseeching him to breath upon him his Spirit of Charity, recommended so much to us in his word, but more in his actions; and to inflame him with this divine fire, which he hath kindled in the midst of his Church, to be wholly burnt and consumed with it: he consulted him in all his doubts concerning it, begging of him to inspire, what, and how, and when, he should speak and act for the good of his neighbour, and that in him, and by him, these might all be done.

He look'd upon men, not according to their natural qualities, their beauty, nobility, riches, dignities, and wordly honors, but according to their more noble relations and those common to all; viz. as creatures divine, the lively Images of God, created to praise and love him to all Eternity, as dyed and purpled in the blood of Jesus, Brothers and Co-heirs with him, his Purchase and Inheritance, bought with the Price of his Life, and a thousand dolours; and who therefore must be infinitely dear unto him, and most passionately beloved of him.

In this Capacity it was, that he beheld men, loving and applying himself to their Necessities, and he arrived by the purity of this conduct to so far perfection, that as on the one side he was extreamly useful to his Neighbour, and received therein wonderful blessings from God; so on the other, this Communication with them, did not distract, nor bring any prejudice to himself, but very much good. There
are

are that advise them, who have to do with others in the matter of their Salvation, especially with such from whose converse any danger may arise, to consider them as Bodies without Souls, or as Souls without Bodies, and as pure Spirits. The Counsel is good, and some make profitable use of it; but Monsieur Renty's view was, to look upon God and Jesus Christ in every man, and to consider, that it was they that demanded succour of him, and prepared his thoughts to talk to them, and perform what was necessary for their Souls and Bodies, believing truly, that it was to God and Christ, that he rendered these Assistances and Service. And this same thought is much to be made use of, that we may do good, and take no hurt from others; otherwise we shall hazard our selves, and do little good, for when we proceed upon the inclinations and motives of Nature, the Effects have a relish of their Cause, proving no more but Natural, or Vicious, or at most indifferent; *viz.* loss of time, light discourses, amusements, engagement of Affections, which carry in them much of sense, and degenerate afterwards into something worse, whereby instead of purifying one another, a man pollutes and undoes himself: He that will conduct Souls to Christ and God, must of necessity carry them through such ways as lead thither.

C H A P. II.

His Charity to his Neighbour taken in general.

HAVING a purpose to speak of his Charity, which this man of God had towards his Neighbour, I shall speak first of it in general, and say thus much, that it was so great and enlarged, that it seemed to have no bounds; in that he loved not only all Christians and Faithful People, but even all men, not excepting any, because he held motives in all of them of a true Charity, and sincere Love, looking upon them as Creatures of God, and his Chief Workmanship, for whom our Saviour became man, and laid down his Life, whom he Loved and desired to Save; these all he likewise Loved, and Laboured their Good: *Thy Commandment saith David, is exceeding broad*; the same dimensions he prescribed to his Charity, Loving the Present and Absent, Domesticks and Strangers, Good and Bad, esteeming all according to their Degree, honouring all, speaking well of, and doing good to all, and doing ill to none.

There was not any considerable publick good work done either at *Paris*, and a great way off it, wherein he had not a great share. There was no undertaking there, that tended to the honour of God, or good of men, of which he was not either the Author, or Promoter, or Finisher, and very often all

all these together. He was one at all the Meetings for Piety, and in many as the Soul and *Primum Mobile*, he kept Correspondence through the whole Kingdom, concerning Works of Charity, received from all parts Letters, desiring his Advice in all Difficulties that occur'd, in the Erecting or Advancing of Hospitals, Seminaries of Religion, Places of Devotion, Fraternities of Vertuous Persons, agreeing to Associate together for the better applying themselves to their own and others Salvation, and for the managing all sort of Good Works.

One of good Report, writ thus concerning him, from *Caen*.

Monsieur *Renty* was our Support and only Refuge, in the Execution of all our Designs, which related to the Service of God, the Saving of Souls, and Relief of the Poor and Distressed: To him we wrote continually, as well for the Settling of our Hospitals, and Houses for receiving of Loose Women Converted, as also for the suppressing the Insolence of some Hereticks, who shewed Contempt of the Blessed Sacrament too openly. Finally, we received Counsel and Succour from him in all like Occasions; in which he expressed a great Zeal for the Glory of God, and extirpation of Vice: Since his Death, we have not met with any to whom we could have the like recourse about the things of God.

Another from *Dijn* wrote thus: We cannot but acknowledge the great benefit this Province hath received from Monsieur *Renty*, wherever he came; wherein he hath wonderfully advanced all Works of Piety. We may truly say, that his days were filled with the plenitude of God; and we believe, that he scarce lost one minute of time, in which he
either

either spake not, or acted not something tending to his service.

He applied himself to the necessities of the *English*, *Irish*, and captives in *Barbary*, and of the Missions into the *Levant*; he took very great pains for the good of the Hospital at *Marcelles*, for the relief of Galley-slaves; and contributed much to the advancing of the affairs of new *France* in *America*: he had a design likewise to purge all Trades and Manufactures from corruptions that had grown upon them, to Rectifie and Sanctifie them, that men might live upon them like Christians; which thing he, together with others, had happily begun, and perfected the same in two of them, as shall be shewed hereafter.

Moreover, as one of the great effects of Charity is Concord and Union, so had he a wonderful care to conserve, encrease and perfect it in himself and others; wherefore he lived in perfect amity with all the world, with Seculars, Ecclesiasticks, and Religious, esteeming, respecting, and speaking honourably of them all; and when any difference fell out among them, he was greatly afflicted for it, endeavouring by all means, to pacifie and unite their spirits, and to accord their divisions; knowing, that the God whom we worship, is a God of peace, who would have us live in peace, and that never any discord comes from him, but from the Devil, the sower of Tares; that nothing is more opposite to the spirit of Christianity, than spirit of Union and Love, than Division and Schismes in Charity, making us not live like brothers, but strangers and enemies; that instead of profiting in vertue, we multiply and encrease
our

our sins and vices : The spirit of the new Law, is a spirit of perfect Charity, and intimate Union, that (as St. Paul saith) it makes no distinction, as to the heart of Jew nor Gentile, of Barbarian nor Scythian, of bond nor free, but Jesus Christ is all to all, to unite, and close, and oblige them all in himself : According to which this true Christian writeth thus, in one of his letters :

The words which we ought chiefly to imprint upon our hearts, are those of mutual love, which our Saviour bequeathed us in the close of his Testament ; this love should inspirit all Christians, to perfect them in one, and cause them to live and converse together as brethren and children, yea, as one sole child of God.

And because this Union with Christ our Saviour, to whom we all belong, is the best and most necessary disposition in such as are employed about the good of their neighbour, to the end that they may receive from him both light and strength, to enable them according to his purposes, together with his saving spirit, to assist and ground them in all virtues, and especially such as qualifie a man for that purpose, therefore his utmost endeavour was, to unite himself intimately to him, and in all things to act by his Spirit, and to acquire these virtues, and render himself perfect in them.

These virtues are set down by St. Paul, in the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, upon which he made frequent reflections, and long meditations; and although he carried always the New Testament in his pocket, yet that he might read and consider them often, he wrot them down with his own hand, carrying it apart about him : The Contents whereof were,

Charitas

Charitas patients est : benigna est :

Charitas non emulatur : non agit perperam :

Non inflatur, non est ambitiosa :

Non querit que sunt sua : non irritatur, &c.

Charity is patient, full of sweetness, envieth not, is not malicious nor hurtful, is neither vain nor ambitious, seeketh not her own Interests, is not froward nor cholerick, thinks no ill, but interprets all to a good sense, rejoyceth not at the faults of others; but on the contrary, takes great content in others well-doing, suffereth much, believeth all things, not out of feebleness of spirit, but out of Goodness and Holy Simplicity; if its Neighbour mend not presently, hopes always that he will, and in the interim beareth all things from him.

These are the Vertues in which he must be particularly exercised, that will deal profitably with his Neighbour, without which he labours in Vain; for experience will shew him, that after much time and pains, he shall profit little; for the more any one is filled from God, and animated by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the more shall he advance holiness in himself, and good in others; yea, though his words be few and ordinary, for that our Employments receive not their force, from the mouth that utters them, as from the disposition of the heart, and the Spirit that animates it.

Now as bare Vertue alone, is not sufficient to compleat a man for this design, but one must also have a Capacity thereunto. So this Charitable Man, besides that Capacity wherewith God had abundantly furnished him, as well of a great wit, piercing, solid,
well-

well disposed, resolute, laborious and constant; and of a body well made, of a good grace and presence; and besides the Sciences and fine knowledge which he had learnt in his youth; he had also by his own industry and travel (being good at every thing) learnt several things, not only for his own use, but to teach them to others, whereby to help themselves, or make some other use of them; as, to let blood, to make medicines for curing of wounds, to compound remedies for several diseases, of which he had Books writ with his own hand, which he communicated, abasing himself to learn the meanest skills, which might any way be useful to others.

One day in *Paris*, he carried a Friend with him to a poor man, who got his Living with making Hots and wicker baskets, in a Cave; into which he entred, and in the presence of his Friend, finished a Hot which he had begun some days before, with design, having learned the thing, to teach it to some poor people in the Countrey, to help to get their Living: he left the Hot: and a piece of money to boot for teaching him, with the poor man, which indeed deserved to have been repositied in some Cabinet of Rarities, or rather in some place of Devotion, as a glorious Monument of an Heroick Charity.

Understanding when he was at *Dijon*, that the Religious Veselines, whom he affected very much, provided, out of Charity, Drugs and Medicines for poor people; he was much pleased with it, and to improve their good work, taught the Sisters belonging to the Infirmary, to make some excellent Compositions, which had very great Vertue against several Maladies, preparing them, dispensing and boyling them himself, stooping to the meanest and most troublesome

troublesome labours, as much as could be done by any servant, holding his head for a long time over the smoak of those medicins, which sent forth no pleasant fumes, before a great fire, not disisting till all in a sweat, without any word or sign at all of complaining of what he suffered. The Religious desired him to suffer the lay Sisters to help and assist him, but his mind was so set upon it, that they must let him alone, and give place to that fire of Charity, which inflamed him all within, and which sweetned unto him, or rather consumed all the pains, the outward material fire could inflict; yea, and moreover he urged them out of great prudence, to acquaint him with the hours of their devotions, and set times of their meetings, that he might not divert them from these, being a punctual observer of the time they appointed him, that he failed not one minute, though with much difficulty, considering his several other employments, to which he stood engaged.

The like he observed in all other things, inso-much that he took upon him all shapes, transformed himself into any figure, condescended to all accommodations, for the good of his Neighbour, and all these by vertue of this Celestial Fire, which melted and cast him wholly into the mould of Charity, his thoughts, words, actions, and each thing in him was Charity, which made him say one day thus, in a Letter to one of his great Confidants :

Methinks my Soul is all Charity, and I am not able to express with what ardency and strange expansion I find my heart to be renewed in the Divine Life of my new-born Saviour, burning all in Love towards mankind.

§. 1. His

§. II. *His Charity to the Poor.*

First of all, concerning his Charity and Affection to the poor, I shall say this, that Jesus Christ was not only the fountain from whence this grace did flow, but also the motive and object, in that he beheld him in them, and him chiefly he imagined to assist and serve in their persons: so that his thoughts staid not upon their torn and ragged habit, nor upon their vile and despicable outside, which naturally displeaseth the Eye, offendeth the Smell and other Senses: But passing further, he beheld within and under these, with the Eye of Faith, our Lord Jesus Christ present and dwelling in them, whom he esteemed as his native images, loved and valued by him: And as he burned with an ardent affection toward our Lord, so he loved tenderly the poor, succoured them with all his might, and left nothing unattempted for their sakes: With these eyes, and not those of nature, must each one behold the poor, that will love them indeed, and have bowels of compassion, and a true resolved and constant Charity towards them.

In the second place, resolving to give you this Charity by retail, we will begin with that which he exercised in his house; where from the year, 1641. he invited to dinner poor men, two in number, and at first twice every week; on *Tuesdays* and *Fridays*; but five or six years after, finding himself much engaged in other services, for the honour of God and good of his neighbour, he reduced

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them

them to one day, which ordinarily was *Thursday*, and then invited three: which he ordered in this manner, willing to joyn his spiritual Alms with his Corporal (an important secret, to be learned and practised by all charitable persons, each one according to their capacities) he sought out such poor as seemed to him to have greatest need of instruction; wherefore during his abode at *Paris*, after his morning devotions, he went to *S. Antoine Gate*, and there took up such, as were newly arrived, whom courteously saluting, he brought home, and if it were winter brought them to the fire, always making them sit down; and afterwards, with a cordial affection, which appeared in his countenance and whole deportment, and with a marvellous grace, he instructed them in what was needful for them to know, in the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of our Lord, and Holy Sacrament. He likewise instructed them how to make Confession, and to communicate worthily, and in brief, how to live vertuously; this done, he gave them water to wash, set them down at table where himself served bareheaded, with exceeding great respect, and set the dishes before them with his own hands, brought in by his children and servants, in which his Lady also had a great hand, enjoined silence to others whilst they were eating, providing that they should feed freely and familiarly: after dinner dismissed them with an Alms, himself waiting on them to the gate, with very great reverence, and some wholesome discourse.

He must be very much a Christian, that could do in this manner; and a Nobleman of his age and quality, who stoops to such services, must have his

eyes very strongly fixed upon his Saviour, otherwise such offices will go down with much difficulty. Its true indeed, a Courtier will make no scruple, but rather a point of honour and delight, to wait upon his Sovereign, disguised in Rags or some poor habit; but then he must be well assured it is the King, and no other. Many persons of quality in *Paris*, and elsewhere, being present at this so holy and Christian an action, were much taken therewith, and encouraged to imitate it, at least in part. This laudable Custom he continued to his death; and when his occasions would not permit him to perform it in his own person, his Lady did the same to so many poor women.

His other custom was on that day in the week that Christmas day fell upon every year, to invite a poor childe of ten or twelve years old to dinner; and on the day of Epiphany, to invite a woman with a sucking childe, in honour of the mystrie of that day; likewise on Midsummer day, in honour of *S. John Baptist* his Patron, he invited twelve poor people, waiting upon them himself; and on *Mauudy Thursday* did the like, after he had washed their feet.

Besides these, and several other Charities and Alms at his own house, he endeavoured the general relief of all the poor in *Paris*, and all other places thereabouts, as much as possible; busied himself to understand their wants, studied ways of remedy, and carefully prosecuted them; and what he could not accomplish himself, he commended to others, spake for them, begg'd for them, bought necessaries for them, and caried them with his own hands; studied to establish settled courses of Living, for Men and Children that were destitute;

and when he could not at present provide for them abroad, he kept and maintained them at his own house, untill he could conveniently put 'em forth.

He was the first that thought upon and motion'd some Relief for poor *English* Catholicks, driven by Persecution out of their Country, engaging persons of Quality in the purchasing of Lands for their Subsistence, and having brought it to Perfection, himself undertook the Charge of distributing one part of this Charity; which he performed monthly, going to them afoot, and commonly alone, having made choice of those Quarters which were most remote, where entring their Chamber, he saluted them with Tenderneſs and Compassion, and after in a very Civil and Respectful Way, he gave them their Allowance, lapt up in a Paper privately. One day in his return from this Employment, he spake to a Friend on this manner:

Certainly these are good Christians, who have left all for God, whereas we live in Plenty, whilst these content themselves with two Crowns a Month, having parted with thousands for their Conscience, and endure with Patience such considerable Losses: O Sir, Christianity consists not in words or shews, but in deeds.

Furthermore, this Wise and Charitable Man, joyned with his Care of the Poor, one considerable point of Prudence; viz. after his Visits and Survey taken of their Wants in gross, he Examined in particular as well their Spiritual as their Corporal Necessities, and endeavoured in the first place to mark their Inclinations, their Passions, their Ill Habits, what Vices were predominant in them, what were their chief Infirmities; that like a prudent Physician, he might apply fit Remedies, duly exhorting them

to live like Christians, and to make a sanctified use of their Poverty.

As to their Temporal Necessities, he considered each one's Capacity, Industry, Trade, and Employment of each: if Tradesmen, he consider'd what was necessary to set them to work, what Tools or Materials, which accordingly he provided, either buying new ones, or redeeming their own laid at pawn; bought materials, giving them provision of Bread for two or three days, and procuring them work, and that not only for themselves, but their Wives and Children, and afterwards bought some of their Work, and bestowed it in Alms upon others, took order for the quick Sale of others Commodities, encouraging them to take pains, and avoid Idleness, coming from time to time to visit them, and see if all went well with them.

To these we may adde, his Charity to poor Prisoners, whom he visited, comforted and relieved, mediating and procuring their Liberty, when he found it expedient for the good of their Souls: For one day he returned this Answer, to some that made suit to him for the Release of him we are now coming to speak of:

We often get men out of Prison, who make use of their Liberty to the dishonour of God, and their own destruction, for whom it had been better they had remained in duance.

This being first considered, he afterwards laboured for their Enlargement with great Affection; of which I shall now give a pregnant proof.

There was in *Low-Normandy*, a Prisoner for divers Years, who was both Innocent, and in great Extremity; several Persons had endeavoured his Freedom, but without Success, by reason of a Potent Adversary. The Business was commended

to Monsieur *Renty*, who after a just information of the Case, undertook the matter, chose an honest man, a Master of Requests, where the Cause depended, to make Report of it to the Council, commended the prosecution of it to his own Advocate, went in his own person often to see and sollicite it, undertaking for the Charge of the whole Business.

Notwithstanding all this, perceiving the Cause to hang long, and the Prisoner to languish in Misery, he changed his purpose, writ to his Adversary in his behalf; requested that the business might be referred to him, promising to make a journey into *Normandy*, and there to accommodate the matter to his Content. When he came thither, he presently set up a Mission in his Parish of *Beny*; from whence taking along with him one of the Fathers of the Mission, he went to the Town where both parties were.

When his coming was noised in that place, all the Streets were filled with People, blessing God for his coming; and understanding the occasion thereof, professed, that none but he could accomplish that business, or put an end to that poor mans misery, praising God that had chosen such a holy man, with a thousand good Prayers for him. He went straight to the Prison, where the Father made an Exhortation to the Prisoners, to Strengthen and Comfort them, which he seconded with his Alms; after which, he promised the poor man to go to his Adversary, to induce him by Arguments, and perswade him with Intreaties, to grant his Enlargement; in the meantime, that he should pray to God to bless his Endeavours, and should rest in hope, that by some means or other, with Gods Grace, he should be deliver'd.

Thence

Thence he went to the other parties house, whom he treated with all perswasive means, returning back to the Prison to receive Information upon some difficulties that occur'd betwixt them; where finding all the Prisoners together at their usual Devotions, he waited till they had done, though it was very late, towards Seven a Clock, having two Leagues to go after that to his own House, where it was Ten a Clock at Night before his return: having at length taken Instructions from his Prisoner, he went back to the other Party, with whom he came to such an Agreement, that this poor man, after Nine Years Imprisonment, and a world of Misery, by his Solicitation and Charity, was Released, whom he obliged to come to Confession and Communion to the Fathers of the Mission, and render thanks to Almighty God for his Deliverance; and to assist him further therein, according to his Custom of adding Charity to Charity, he maintained him Eight Days at his own House, discoursing with him every Evening, and exhorting him to a Good Life; and at his departure, perswaded him to go see his Adversary, whom he found now as sweet and as tractable, as before he had been incens'd against him. And since that time, being made Priest, he was one at the Church of *Bey*, to say Mass for the Intention of his Deliverer.

S. 2. Of his Charity to poor sick men.

IF his Charity was thus great toward the poor, certainly it was far greater to such poor as were sick; for in them he beheld a double object of this most excellent Vertue, Poverty and Sicknes, both which conjoynd, did kindle a redoubled flame in his compassionate Affections.

We scarce read of any thing in the Lives of the greatest Saints of this Subject, which he did not practise: It was of such an extent and progress, that not content to assist them in one or two ways, they found in him, and that often in one Visit, a Benefactor, a Physician, Apothecary, Chyrurgeon, Pastor, Father, Brother, Friend and Servant, comforting them every way, and in such fashions as have not formerly been known or practised, especially by Persons of his Rank and Quality.

In the Year 1641. he learnt to let blood, and other parts of Chyrurgery, he endeavoured to know how to make all sorts of Medicines; and to that end, consulted with a Physician, by whom he was instructed in some principal things of this Art; wherein his design was not the bare knowledge, but the practice: When ever he went abroad either in Town or Countrey, he carried about him a Chyrurgeons Box, and several Powders, for the Cure of most ordinary Diseases: These he used with great dexterity and confidence, yet prudently enough, never advancing rashly beyond his Skill in cases of difficulty.

In his visits of the sick, he never shunned any service necessary for them, and in his power to perform; as, making their beds, helping them to bed, making their fire, washing their dishes, setting in order their little household stuff, fixing every thing; hoping hereby to win upon the affections of those poor people, the better to comfort, and exhort them to patience, and draw them to God with more facility. He was seen one Day at *Dijon* (which place was an ample Theater of his virtues, for many months of his abode there) without his Cloak, with a potsherd in his hand, begging fire at ones door, for a poor sick body. In which Town, after he had once or twice visited sick folks, in company of such as shewed him their dwellings, he returned often alone to the same, exercising towards them greater and more humble acts of Charity, than when in company, succouring and relieving them both by day and night.

In the year, 1640. visiting several sick folks in *S. Pauls* Parish in *Paris*, he met with a Religious woman, who had the care of them, coming out of an house, whom he asked what she sought there? who answered, Jesus Christ, and that she came now out of a chamber, where there was great need of Charity. He was much taken with that answer; replying, that he sought him also: And so both went to that house, where there were many sick persons, whom notwithstanding he had already the same day visited, made them broth, giving them their break-fast, and made their beds.

This good woman led him to several other places, where he instructed the sick, and gave them alms, and afterwards he continued this holy exercise in her Company, setting a part for it one day

day in the week, which commonly was Friday; on which he made his visits, let them blood, wiping his hands not with any fine linnen but with any dish-clout that came next hand, administering proper remedies for their diseases, assisting and serving their necessities, but chiefly their spiritual ones, comforting and encouraging them, preparing them for a good Confession, and worthy receiving. Informing himself in each Family, whether God was served there? whether any quarrels or differences were amongst them? which he was careful to take up, especially amongst poor folks, whom whenever he met with them, though in the streets, he would admonish of their fault, and endeavour to accord them.

Finally, he never left such places, without providing for all their necessities, which he took notice of with incredible Charity, sweetness and respect; dispensing with other business, that he might have sufficient time to hear all their complaints with invincible patience.

In all his journeys, as soon as he alighted, he went to the Church, to adore the blessed Sacrament (as we have mentioned elsewhere) after which, he enquired if there were any Hospitals in that place; whither (if the time will permit) he failed not to go, visiting their sick, enquiring if sufficient care was taken for them, administering what remedies he could, with his hand, by Bleeding and Medicines, and with his words, in sweetening their pains, by good discourse and encouragement, and with his Alms.

In the great Hospital of *Paris*, this honourable mention hath been made of him, We have seen
Monsieur

Monsieur Remy frequenting this Hospital for twelve years together and upwards, with wonderful diligence; both at his entrance and departure he went to the Church, where he remained sometimes before the B. Sacrament, which thing did excite devotion in all those that saw him, both there at his entry, he offered up all his actions to our Saviour, and begg'd such graces of him as were needful, and at his going out, begg'd a blessing to render his indeavours successful; this done, he went into the rooms, bestowing himself and his Charity amongst the sick, from two a clock till five, directing and comforting them in all their necessities. We have seen him dressing and making clean their soars and ulcers, many times kissing the feet of the sick, assisting to bury their dead. Moreover, he taught the Religious women that waited on them, to make some oyntments they knew not formerly, and made them himself before them in the place. Commonly he came thither alone, sometime in company of some Noblemen of good quality; who encouraged by such an example, strove to imitate it in some sort, and to have a part in such holy actions.

Neither did he only visit the sick; but they likewise sought him, and would finde him out whereever he came, if they were able to go abroad. At *Dijon* they would come to him in troops, for all sorts of sickness and distempers. In the year, 1642, going to his estate in *Normandy*, he spent about four months in these works of mercy, administering Physick and Chyrurgery to all the sick of that Countrey, in such sort, that from all quarters they came to him, and in such multitudes

multitudes daily, that one could scarce come near him. This puts me in mind of that we read of our Saviour, how that from all parts they brought to him all that were sick of all diseases, to be healed by him; which seems to be represented in some measure by this his Servant and true Disciple, in that the sick, the weak, the lame, or otherwise infirm, came to him from all sides; and we have seen him compassed about with a throng of 'em, some to be let blood, some for his oyntments, powders, or other medicines; some for counsel or consolation, some for an Alms, or for ease in some case or other. Treating all with the like diffusive Christian Charity, with the like bowels of Pity and Compassion, the like Spirit of Love; as wherewith the Son of God, of whom he received it, had pity upon us. And stood in the midst of them, with the like Goodness and Patience, endeavouring to do good, and minister Comfort to them all.

S. 3. A further Prosecution of the same Charity, and the Success.

BEYOND all these, his Charity yet ascended higher, even to the Care and Cure of such Diseases as were very troublesome, and which to Nature carried much horror and aversion along with them.

At his Castle at *Beny*, he entertained poor people infected with scall'd heads, lodging them in a Chamber fitted and furnished for 'em; where himself visited them, plucking off their Scabs with his Plaisters; attending and feeding them till their Recovery. At *Paris* likewise he visited the same in the Suburbs of *St. Germain*, (which was their usual abode) carrying them

them some collection of Alms, joyning Humility also with his Charity; forasmuch as he hath been seen standing in the midst of these noysome sick folks bare-headed, attending to a Sermon which he had procured for them.

A credible witness testifieth thus of him: I have seen Monsieur Renty in his Hall at Beny, dressing a Cancer, which a man would not look upon at some distance without aversion and horror: which he (having mastered all such squeamishness of Nature) did handle with pleasure and respect.

During his abode at Dijon, he met with a Wench, who had been taken with the Soldiers, by whom she had gotten the foul Disease; some Charitable People had perswaded the Religious Nuns, the Vesulines, to take her into their Care, who lodged her in a poor Neighbours house, her Body was in a very sad condition, even nothing but Rottenness, casting out such a stinking infectious smell, that none could come near her, and the House she lodged in, were ready to turn her out of doors, so that she was in a forlorn Condition, had not the Superior there, a Woman of great Vertue, bethought her self to confer with Monsieur de Renty (to whom she bore a very great Respect) about the means of relieving this poor Creature.

This good mans Charity, like a perpetual motion, giving him no rest or truce, not for a Moment, carried him instantly to visit this poor Creature, and to provide for her Extremity. In the first place, he hireth a Woman to attend her, and deals with her Host to keep her there: After this, he provides her Dyet-drinks, and Physick proper for her Disease, bringeth her Broths his own self, with all other

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other convenient nourishment; stayed by her a long time at each visit, and whilst she was in a sweat, wipes her with his own handkerchief, using the same himself afterward; a thing more admirable than imitable: Moreover, having as great a Care of her Soul as Body, instructs and comforts her, taking the pains once in a day to read her a Lecture out of some Book of Devotion; enduring with much Courage and Delight, all the Difficulties of Trouble and Inconvenience, that so noysome a Disease could present, by its stench and rottenness: at all which, his heart leapt, as if it had been entertained by some delicate perfume, which was, no doubt, the sweet odour of Jesus Christ, whom he look'd upon in these poor people (as we have said before) which perfumed all their Infections, and caused him to find delicacies in the greatest loathsomeness.

In fine, by his Care, he retrieved this poor creature from Misery, and the very jaws of Death, brought her into the state of a good Christian; insomuch, that she spent the rest of her time very virtuously; and whenever she came to the Monastery of the Vesulines, she could not hold from Relating with great feeling, the unparalell'd Charities of Monsieur *Renty*, together with her deepest obligations which she every where published, with the highest recognition of her Gratitude to so worthy a Person.

Neither were these generous Acts of his Charity, enclosed within the Walls of *Dijon*, several other places and Hospitals bearing witness of the like, which we have heard from divers, and have good cause to believe. To which we may add his ardent desire for the Erecting of an Hospital for the infected with the King's Evil, there being none such in *Paris*, nor in all *France*. Thus

Thus did this great Servant of God imploy himself about Diseases, and those the most noysome. And now let us consider what Blessings and Success God gave to his Endeavours and Medicines, which will appear little less than Miraculous. Being in *Low-Normandy*, much busied amongst his sick people, men were astonished to see how he Cured all Diseases, even the most desperate and extraordinary; and that with Remedies sometimes, which scarce appeared to have any thing in them; which made those that took notice of them apt to believe, that the Cures were wrought, not so much by any natural power of the Medicines, as by Grace and Miracle.

The same opinion they had at *Dijon*, of the Cures he wrought there, that they were healed by some way supernatural. To which purpose, I cannot let pass, the discourse he had with the Prioress of the Carmelites, a great Confident of his, whom he visited often, to whom he related, how a little before, a Woman in Child-bed, had been sick unto Death, and given over by all the Physicians, whom he visited notwithstanding, and tryed whether in so great Extremity, his Remedies might minister any Ease.

I went to her (said he) and made up the Medicine I had, yet such as I could not imagine to have so great a Vertue, as to Cure that Disease: What then? having no better, I prayed to God for his Blessing upon that, if it might be for his Glory, and the good of the Patient. God did it; for coming to visit her again, I found her well recovered.

The Prioress asking him, if he did thus often? he Answered:

Yes, when he was desired it; for these being poor People, have no other help, neither have I any better Remedies:

I know

I know my Saviour is not tyed to Medicines ; we must have Faith in him, where we can do nothing our selves ; and that out of his Bounty he hath bestowed on me.

She replied, But this is then a Miracle?

And doth not he work Miracles for us every day ? said he.

And do you such for the Poor ? said the Prioresse. To which he Answered with great humility and well becommingness in these words :

My Lady Prioresse calls that a Miracle, which our Lord hath wrought ; for my part, I have no share in it, but only by bestowing on the poor (such as I have, make what you please of it, all my Reflection thereupon is, only to return Praise to my Saviour Christ when the Cure is done.

If the Holy Scriptures command us to honour the Physician for our necessity of him : Undoubtedly, those are much more to be honoured, who proceed in their Cures, not so much according to the Method and Direction of *Galen* and *Paracelsus*, as that of God.

S. 4. His Zeal for the Salvation of his Neighbour.

THis part of Charity will appear greater and more ardent in Monsieur Renty, than the former, as being the most sublime and noblest degree of it, as saith St. Thomas. And the first, in regard of its object the Soul ; which is incomparably more excellent than the Body. And secondly, in regard of the things bestowed in this way of Charity, which infinitely surpasses those other, as much as an Eternal Possession in the

the heavens, conveyed by the one, superlatively exceeds bread, silver, health, supplied by the other. Wherefore his holy prudence clearly preceiving a difference, was transported with far other affections to the one, than to the other.

And being continually inflamed with the love of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, unceasingly sought all ways, and used all means, to make them known and beloved, both here and eternally, by all men; preventing what he could, any offence, or sinning against them, daily pondering with himself, the inexplicable goodness and tenderness of God towards the souls of men, which have been so dear to him, and cost him such an invaluable price. He entered into the same affections, loving, and desiring their salvation, according to that Model.

This zeal of his was admirable, having all the qualities to render it perfect: Being in the first place universal, extended to all in *France*, out of *France*, yea, all the world over: Insomuch, that he said to one of his Familiars, that he was ready to serve all men, not excepting one, and even to lay down his life for any one upon occasion: He earnestly desired to convert, to enlighten with the knowledge of God, to inflame with his love, to sanctify and save the whole world, if it had been in his power; of which *Paris* being, as it were an Epitome, he went through all the quarters and streets of that vast City, searching out what he could remove or bring in, for the glory of God, and salvation of souls: And the same Spirit of God that conducted him in this inquiry, blessed his endeavours, and gave him the favour to rectify what was out of course, to confirm the wavering, to strengthen
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what was in order, to root out vice, and plant virtue: Which he did in so many several ways, as a man would think it impossible; but what cannot a man do, that is zealous, disinterested, and full of God?

He performed what possibly he could in his own person, not sparing any cost, nor losing one minute of time; and wherein his power and strength of body or mind, falling short of his desires, proved deficient, he engaged others: Whereupon, he procured Millions at his own charge, in his own Countreys of *Normandy* and *Brie*; and by joynt contribution of others, erected the like in many other Provinces, where he had no Land; as, in *Burgundy*, *Picardy*, *Chartrain*, and elsewhere.

And here it will not be amiss to take his own words concerning these, out of a Letter may self received from him, relating to a Mission in his Lordship of *Citry* in *Brie*.

The Mission was begun here on Whitsunday, a day that bringeth with it an extraordinary benediction: the peoples hearts are touched with great sense of repentance, which they manifest by abundance of tears: Many restitutions and reconciliations are made, common and publique prayers are made in Families, swearing and cursing are redressed. And this Reformation extends it self to three or four leagues round about us. Amongst many others, there came a young maid, whose life had been very vicious, who returned home a real Convert, giving an ample testimony of her repentance, relinquishing her former acquaintance: Whereby I find, that this was the very end; for which my Saviour brought me hither, and engaged my abode in this place.

These operations of grace, filled him up with unspeakable joy, which often distilled into tears, for
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having to do in that which made for the glory of God; and benefit of souls. We have from an eye-witness, who hath seen tears stand in his eyes; and demanding the cause, received from him this answer:

I profess they proceed from that excessive joy I take to see so many touched with remorse; evidencing their conversion, by making restitutions, by being reconciled to their enemies, burning their idle and vain books, quitting their former occasions of sin, commencing a life altogether new.

We have seen him likewise in the Church of City so transported with zeal, that he hath swept the Church, carried out the dirt himself; rung the bell to assemble the people thither.

In all his Missions, he commonly employed some Secular Priests of his acquaintance, living in community, and settled at Caen for those employments: who have quitted themselves herein with great benediction, and notable success. He writ divers Letters to their Superiour, earnestly entreating and conjuring him, to promote this business seriously and heartily; giving him account of what Missions were established, and what were in a hopeful way, what he had done in them himself, and to whom else he had spoken; with such courses as were to be taken to make them effectual.

The year he dyed, this was written in a Letter to the same person; concerning a Mission he had projected in the Town of *Drieux*, of the Diocess of *Chartres*.

I have solicited several persons, to joyn in setting up a Mission every year; and I shall go my self along with it as oft as I can, to serve and obey your orders, in visiting

the sick, and giving alms to the needy: And for the same design, to assemble some companies of people whom God hath wrought upon by your preaching: Since God gave us a heart thereto, we have brought others, to have a hand in it; and my Wife, with two others, bear their part in it, imitating herein St. Mary Magdalen, Joanna, and Susanna, of whom St. Luke saith, that they followed our Saviour and his Disciples, ministering with their substance, for the preaching of the Kingdom of God. We shall endeavour to perform this without noise or shew, taking a private lodging apart for the purpose. Be pleased (my dear Father) to be our Father and Guide, and assist us in Autumn, if you can, to break the bread of life to those, who with great humility desire it of you. I beg of your Reverence with tears, to give ear to our request, who are touched with the necessities of our poor brethren, and the love of Christ, who desires to unite us together in one heart, even his own; that therein we may live in the presence of God. My dear Father, I commit this charge to your care, it being only in the power of his holy Spirit. to render yours, and the endeavours of other Fathers, successful: I trust he will hear us, and that we shall see abundance of his mercies. I attend your sense, both for the thing and the time: and in the mean time, you may, if you please, keep the thing secret between us.

S. 5. Of the same Subject.

WE have already declared, how he kept correspondence all over France, and elsewhere, concerning great undertakings, and important affairs, for
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the glory of God, and good of his neighbour. He further obliged in all places, as much as he could, several persons, to joyn together, and assist one another, in the work of their own, and others salvation. And procured Assemblies of Piety for divers uses, of which he wrote thus, in one of his Letters, 1648.

I am now returned from Burgundy, where my journey hath been full of imployment, in helping the setting up of several companies of men, and women also, who have a great zeal for Gods service.

In a Memorial from Caen, we have these words, Monsieur Renty hath settled here many Assemblies of devout persons, whom he advertised to meet once a week, and consult about relief of the poor, and the preventing of offences against God, which hath succeeded marvellously. Moreover, he advised divers Gentlemen of the Countrey, to meet together from time to time, to encourage one another in the way of Christianity, and make a Profession against Duels.

He writ to a Superiour of one of the Missions in these words:

I was united in Spirit to you on Sunday last, which I conceived to be the time of opening your Mission. If you think I may be any way useful, in forming some little body of Gentlemen, and Societies in that City, as we have already performed in little Villages, and Towns, I must humbly intreat you to believe, that I shall imply my utmost in it, though hapily I may do more hurt than good.

When he came to Amiens, where I was, the precious odour of his vertue and sanctity perfumed the whole City: for in less than a fortnights space, he

performed so many, and so great things, in visiting Hospitals, Prisons, and poor people that were ashamed to beg, with several other acts of Piety as were wonderful. In two onely journeys which he made to that place, partly as well by his example, as by his Conversation and Advice, he ingaged several considerable Citizens, in these Exercises of Charity, which they embraced with good courage and alacrity, and have continued in the same inviolably.

It was his earnest desire and designa to plant the Spirit of Christianity in all Families, and to engage people of all conditions, to serve God in good earnest, having special care of their Conscience. He desired to be able to instruct Fathers, Mothers, Children, Masters, Mistresses, and Servants, in their respective duties, aiming herein at their mutual benefit; seeing we can put little confidence in such, who truly fear not God: For he that once comes to falsifie his faith to his Sovereign Lord and Saviour, will not stick, as we may well believe, where the interest of Honour, Pleasure, or Profit doth byais him, to do as much to one who is but that Lords Servant: Wherefore he endeavoured the planting of vertue in all, as the best Promoter of the Service of God, the Salvation of our souls, and the common utility of all relations.

To which purpose he drew certain Rules, for Gentlemen and persons of quality, and likewise for Ladies and Gentlewomen. Since those that are above others in place and dignity, are seen at a further distance, and their example makes a deeper

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impression of good or evil, than that of the vulgar. These I met with, written by his own hand, which deserve to be inserted here, as a Testimony of his zeal to do good to the Public.

Certain Articles, to mind a'l persons of quality, of their Obligations to their Families, their Tenants, and in their || Lordships.

(|| For the better understanding of these Rules, the Reader must know, that the Lords in France have in several Mannors, the power of Justice, as well Criminal as Civil; and for that purpose have their Judges and Subordinate Officers in their Courts.)

THE first and most important obligation, for the conduct of a family, is good example; without which, the blessing of God cannot be expected: It is therefore meet, that all the Domesticks, from the highest to the lowest, give good example of modesty, as well in the Church as in their particular Places and Offices, that by the excellent harmony of their outward behaviour, it may appear that God is the primum mobile within them.

For Officers.

1. The Lord of the Mannor ought to inform himself;
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Whether his Judges and other Subordinate Officers belonging to his Courts, behave themselves well in their places: and be ought to procure for his information, and redress of what is amiss, persons of known ability and integrity.

2. He ought to examine with prudence and privacy, what complaints shall be made by the people, of injustice or bribery.

3. Whether they observe the Rules and Laws of his Court.

4. Whether they frequent Taverns on Sundays and Holydays, or in time of Divine Service.

5. Whether they observe the Precepts of the Church, in forbearing to travel and work on those days, with ut real necessity.

6. Whether they punish publick crimes; as, Blasphemy, Usury: &c. and whether the Laws be put in execution against Drunkards, Fornicators, and Oppressors of the poor: Whether they banish lewd women, who procure many's ruine, and cause so much mischief:

7. Whether there be any such Libertines, who scoff at Religion and Priests, or eat flesh on days prohibited.

8. If some notoriously wicked person be found in the Lordship, it would be convenient to begin with him if it may be; that the rest may understand, that no quarter is to be given to vice; and that it may appear to all the world, with what firm resolution you proceed, in what opposition to Libertines: There is need of zeal and severity, and yet without, sometimes of Clemency, where there is promise of amendment, with appearance of repentance.

9. A Chief Justice may upon good information, without form of Process, commit a man to Prison for 24 hours, with bread and water for blasphemy, or any other notorious vice: and afterward admonish him, that if he continue

continue, he shall be proceeded against, according to form of Law.

10. Some persons are reclaimed sooner by a mulct of the purse, than by corporal punishment; such are to be fined without remission, when found guilty.

11. Scandalous offenders ought to be deprived of the privileges and favours of the Court; yea, and are to be burthened in taxes, and other cases, where they are in a common condition with their neighbours; that they may understand thereby, that they speed the worse for their vicious life. On the contrary, virtue is to be cherished, and countenanced with privileges, and publick favours, and protection.

12. Offices ought to be bestowed gratis, that thereby fit and able Officers may more easily be chosen, and be prevented from the least pretence of Bribery and Injustice.

13. Lords should give good example, by refusing presents from their Tenants (for freeing such from common service) or from those who have business depending before them, or from the poor; shewing themselves disinterested, noble and uncorrupted; whereby their Authority may be preserved, and both their Officers and Tenants kept in strict obedience and respect.

For Royalties.

1. They ought to recommend it to the Gentlemen their neighbours, and observe it themselves, not to hunt or hawk unseasonably, to the prejudice of poor mens corn.

2. They ought not to introduce any such custom upon Country people, of keeping their Hounds.

3. That Coney-warrens be not maintained or erected, to the prejudice of their Tenants, except such as are of ancient standing.

For payment of Taxes.

1. They are to take care, that the rich lay not the burthen upon the meaner sort.

2. That

2. That their Officers and Bailiffs be not unnecessarily multiplied, to the burthening of their Tenants.

3. That they set not Lands at too high rents, upon pretence that by their power, they can remit their taxes: A thing very much to be considered, by reason of some priviledges Lords have in this kinde, whereof the excuse tends to great injustice.

4. That the taxes be equally assessed, according to mens abilities; it being usual with Assessors, to receive money of the meaner sort, to return them insufficient and non solvent. To prevent which, they should give order, that the tax be laid so justly, that what returns are afterward made of insufficiency in any, be imposed upon the Assessors themselves.

For the Church.

1. It were convenient for the Lords, often to visit the Pastors, that the pople might thereby take notice of the respect they give him, and learn thereby their own duty: And likewise to know of them, if any abuses be committed, to be remedied by the Civil power (of which there are some things mentioned in the Articles for Officers) and in particular, what reverence is observed in the Church; whether the people are attentive at the prove, whether they send their children to be Catechized, and come themselves; at which also, you and your family shall be present.

2. Whether the Church stock be improved, and the Church-wardens quit themselves well in their accompts, clearing them at the years end; and that the Churches stock be not made use of, for paying of taxes, or other publique charges; and in case it be so, to prevent such abuses by complaint to the Bishop.

3. To review the former accompts, and provide necessaries for the Church, a Chalice of silver, a decent Tabernack for the B. Sacrament, with comely Ornaments.

4. To learn of the Curate, who are the parson in the Parish, to take a note of them, and consider them in the first place.

5. I would never take place of the Priest, especially in sight of the people.

These are such Instructions as I have collected rudely, and think fit to be observed; besides which, the bringing in of Missions is most excellent, for the planting of the Spirit of Christianity in the hearts of the people, to which every one should contribute their best assistance.

Moreover the Gentlemen of the Countrey, shall do well, to meet once a month, to confer about their duty, and encourage one another in the service of God, who may also settle in Villages, petty Societies of well devoted persons, to take care for preventing abuses, and the occasions of sin, and to relieve and comfort poor people, who are ashamed to beg.

There might be found also a way, to settle amongst good Women, an association of Charity, for instructing, comforting, and succouring the poor and sick. But above all, a company of pious Clergy, who may meet once a month, to confer about the faithful discharging of their mighty function; upon which depends the universal good of the people.

Certain Directions for Ladies and Gentlewomen.

THE way of God is to cause grace to superabound, where sin hath abounded: The first Woman brought death into the world, and the Virgin Mary hath given the Church occasion to sing, that it was a happy fault, since by it was occasioned, our alliance with her Son, and his union with the Deity: But this is not all, for if
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the first woman brought so much evil into the world, it seems to have pleased God, to make use of women, for the reparation thereof; having by his wisdom ordained, that they should have the education of children, and care of the family; whilst men, being of a stronger constitution, are more employed abroad; they, more sedentarily disposed, attending within doors, where they have the knowledge, and oversight, and conduct of all.

From whence it follows, since all orders of Clergy, Nobility, Magistracy, and People, are raised out of private Families, as their common Nursery; that to this Sex is deputed by God, a business of the greatest consequence in the world; viz. The nurturing of souls in the spirit of their Baptism, preserving them unspotted tables, to receive the Impressions of Gods will, and holy vocation, to what future estate he shall design them, for his glory, and their own eternal good: Wherefore it highly concerns them to make frequent reflections upon this, since the greatest good, and most eminent evil of mankind, in part, depends on them, for which they must render one day a strict account.

I. Wherefore they ought to take great care of the education of their children in their tender years, correcting by their vertue and a gentle hand; what nature discovers in them reprehensible: Remembring that for the most part, vice grows up, through their esteeming it to be little, and out of taking pleasure in whatever they see children do; by which compliance, their errors grow up with them, until heat of blood
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and youth, render them incapable of correction.

2. That they be vigilant in instructing their domesticks, shutting the door against all blasphemy, impurity, all unlawful games and pastimes, and other vices.

3. To prevent that their Serving-men haunt not Taverns, and oppress not others.

4. The Mistress of the house must provide, that her servants be carefully treated and tended in their sickness, that she visits them in her own persons, even being as our bretheren, and fellow-servants of the same God and Father of us all : And at all other times, make provision for their necessities, that they be not tempted to pilfer or murmur.

5. Let her also endeavour, not only in her own house, but also among her neighbours, to bring in the custom of common prayers at night ; and if her husband be absent, let her supply his place, in calling them together, and praying with them.

6. Let her and her children be continually in some imployment, that their lives be not unprofitable, or their family brought up in idleness ; remembring the Apostles rule, that he that will not work, shall not eat ; which thing prudently ordered, will prevent many inconveniences.

7. Let her often visit her poor neighbours, to comfort and encourage them in vertuous living.

8. Let her take into her care the repairing of the Ornaments and Linnen of the Church, lest the holy mysteries of our faith be undervalued, where decency is neglected.

9. Let

9. Let her shew great reverence to the Clergy, not regarding the meannells of their birth, but the dignity to which Jesus Christ hath advanced them: Hereby, both putting them in mind of their honourable function, and the people, by her example, of their duty.

10. Let her entertain Visitants, with the Spirit of Hospitality, great Charity, and Christian Civility, taking opportunity thereby to do some good, not losing precious time in frivolous discourses.

11. Let her keep no obscene or immodest Pictures in her house, much less permit her daughters or her self to appear such, by going naked. Avoiding likewise all curious and phantastical fashions, which are evident signs of impenitent hearts, and breed nothing else, but the nourishing the Soul in its corruption, and the averting it from God.

These are the Directions he left under his own hand, for Ladies and Gentlewomen. Moreover, he studied for a long time, how to reform Trades, and free them from those abuses and corruptions, which in process of time they had contracted, and so to sanctifie them, that some at least in each profession, might live like the Primitive Christians, in such sort as to make all their gain common, deducting onely sufficient for their own necessary maintenance, and bestowing the rest upon the poor.

And at length God so blessed his endeavours, that he found some Tradesmen of the same mind and spirit; so that at this present, there be two companies in Paris, one of Taylors, the other of Shoo-makers: and of these in two severall quarters of

of the City (and the like at *Tolose*) who live and do all in Community: They rise, they go to bed, they eat and work together; morning and evening they say their prayers together, and at the beginning of every hour in the day, exercise some Act of Devotion; as, singing a Psalm, reciting their Chaplet, reading in some Book of Devotion, discoursing of some head of the Catechism: They call Brothers, and live accordingly in very great unity and concord.

Monsieur *Renty* was the chief Agent in establishing this business, and with the help and assistance of some Religious persons, drew up Rules, for the ordering of their Spiritual Exercises. They chose him their first Superior, in which Office he had a very particular care of them, visiting them frequently; and when he found them upon their knees at any of their Spiritual Exercises, joyned with them, not permitting them to rise to salute him, or interrupt so good a work, making himself, as it were, one of the Brother-hood.

Moreover, besides these Tradesmen, living in Community, there were a great number of others, of all Professions, that came to him for advice, instruction, and assistance: Whom he treated with wonderful respect and Charity, most affectionately discoursing with them, answering their queries, resolving their doubts, and instructing them what they should pursue, and what avoid, in their Vocations, for the saving of their souls.

§. 6. *The Continuation of the same subject.*

His zeal caried him on to endeavour the good of all sorts of persons. He had a particular inclination to prevent the danger that threatned young maids, who wanted subsistence, and to reclaim such as were saln. And indeed it would be too great a task to recount all his actions of this nature, and the number of those Maids, whom he placed forth, and contributed towards their maintenance; some in houses erected for such purpose, others in the Monastery of *St. Mary Magdalen*, and others with devout Ladies, who added themselves to this kind of Charity: Which is so highly commendably, as that which doth not only save such women, as are in peril of shipwreck of their honour and vertue; and retrieve such as have already lost both: But likewise doth prevent the destruction of many men, and the committing of many enormous sins and disorders.

We mentioned before, what is recorded of his Charity in instructing the poor, at the great Hospital in *Paris*. And now I shall relate how he behaved himself in that of *St. Gervaise*; where passing by one day, in the year 1641. he enquired to what Charities that place was devoted. To which answer was made, that they lodged poor Travelers: He was much pleased with this Institution; and perceiving withal, that so great a number of
poor

Poor that lodged there every night, wanted instruction, he found himself moved from God, to perform that Office: And shortly after, came to beg of the Superiour, with great humility and submission, leave to Catechize them in the evening; when they were assembled together. To which the Superiour willingly assented, without any knowledge of him, who would not tell his Name; but concealed himself for the space of six Months.

He undertook the employment, and performed it with great content, because every night he found there new comers; whom he duly Catechized and instructed; coming thither commonly alone, and on foot; both Summer and Winter, in rain and snow; without light, in the dark. After Catechism ended; he caused them to kneel down with him, to examine their Conscience, and say their Prayers, then sung the Commandments with them, and distributed some Alms. This course he continued for many years, till some Ecclesiastical persons, moved by his example, undertook the business; and continued it to this day with great fruit.

His Charity and tenderness of heart was exceeding great to these poor people, whom he had never seen before; accompanied also with such humility; as cannot easily be expressed. When he met any one at the Hospital, he saluted them with great respect, and put them before him, talked with them bareheaded, and very reverently. If at any time they kneeled to him, he did the like to them; and continued on his knees, till they rose first. One of them observing him diligently, and

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knowing him to be Lord of the place where himself lived, was deeply affected, to see these things, and came and fell down at his feet. Monsieur Renty did the like to him, continuing in that posture for a long time, resolving not to rise, before the poor man. He used to receive them in his Arms, and embrace them with tender Affection.

These actions proceeding from a person of his birth and quality, and produced by the holy Spirit of God, wrought wonderful effects:

And that first, in these poor Passengers, who astonished at such ardent Charity, joyned with such profound Humility, were exceedingly moved thereby, insomuch, that tears of Devotion were seen flowing from their eyes, and themselves falling down at his feet, with signs of repentance for their sins, and a design of a better life; begging his counsel and assistance therein, and beginning it, with going to Confession, and the Sacrament the next day.

Secondly, in those Religious women that belonged to this Hospital, who taking fire at his example resolved to do the like, in daily serving the poor, teaching them their Prayers and Catechism, with the Ten Commandements, which Offices they had never done before, together with many other good things, conducing to their own attaining to perfection, and the better governing of their Hospital: which he infused into them, and they do still continue with great Devotion; he having several times told them, that he hoped in time, to see God greatly glorified and served among them: as we see it is come to pass at this day, and may truly affirm, that this gallant man hath contributed

buted not a little to so much good done there, both within doors and without; and doubt not, but he hath already recieved the reward thereof in Heaven.

But let us further consider some other effects of his zeal: Going one day with a friend to visit the holy place of *Mont-Matre*, to which he had great Devotion; after his prayers said in the Church, he retired into a desolate place of the Mountain; near a little spring, which (as it is said) *St. Denis* made use of, where he kneeled down to his prayers; which ended, made his dinner of a piece of bread, and draught of water: Grace being said, he took out the New Testament, which he always caried in his pocket, and read a Chapter upon his knees, bareheaded, with extraordinary reverence.

In this juncture of time, came thither a poor man, saying his Chaplet. *Monsieur Renty* rose up to salute him, and fell into a discourse with him concerning God, and that so powerfully, that the good man striking his breast, fell down upon the ground, to adote that great God, making such evident appearance of the great impressions that were wrought upon his Spirit, that struck *Monsieur Renty* and his Friend with much astonishment.

Immediately after this, came a poor Maid to draw water at the well; whom he Asked what she was? She answered, a servant: But do you know, saith he, that you are a Christian; and to what End you were Created? Whereupon he took occasion to instruct her, in what he conceived necessary for her to know; and so to the purpose, that she confessing her former ignorance, told him

Ingenuously, that before that hour, she had never thought of her Salvation; but promised from thence forward, to take it into serious consideration, and go to Confession.

Let us still proceed a little higher, on the same subject: In his return from *Dijon*, after his first journey thither, accompanied with two noble pious persons, about some four leagues: He stopped three or four times by the way, to Catechize poor Passengers, and one time went far out of his way, to do the same to some labourers in the field, instructing them how to sanctifie their work they were about.

A young Maid in *Paris*, having been very cruelly used by her Uncle, fell into so great disorder and desparation, that all in a fury, she accused our blessed Saviour to be the cause of her misery, in abandoning her to the barbarous usage of such a man, without relieving her. In this horrid plight of conscience, she went to receive the Sacrament, several times in a day, at several Churches, that she might not be discovered: And this upon design, to do despite to our Saviour, to provoke him to finish her destruction, as it was begun, letting her to fall into the abyss of misery and hell for ever.

Monsieur Renty advertised of this sad Accident, and considering the great Offence against God, and mischief of this poor creature, was transported with zeal speedily to find her out: Which after eight days pursuit from several Churches, at length he did, meeting with her in the very Act of Communicating: Taking witnesses, he conveyed her to an Hospital for Madfolks; where he took

so great care both of her soul and body that she returned to her self, and gave ample testimonies of her conversion and repentance for those horrid Enormities.

Neither did his zeal reach only to those that were near him, but such also as were absent, and far remote; to whom he had no other relation, but what was contracted by his alliance to our blessed Saviour, and his own Charity. Understanding the news that was current some years since, of a War the Turk design'd against the Knights of *Malta*, and to besiege the Island; he so far intrested himself in their danger, that he recommended it twice, by Letter, to the Prayers of sister *Margaret*, Carmelite, of the B. Sacrament at *Beaulieu*, whom he deemed to have great power with God. His first Letter runs thus:

I commend to your Prayers, and of the holy Family, the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, which is at this present in great danger, and with them the whole Christian world. What that common Potent enemy of our Faith will do, I know not one. Our little Jesus, who is all love and power, knows how to vindicate his own glory, please you therefore to commend it to him.

In the second letter thus:

I beseech the Omnipotency of the holy Babe Jesus, to preserve his Children under the Cross, and to purifie them for his own work. This is it, which I request for our Brethren of the Order of St. John Baptist of Jerusalem.

S. 7. *Certain other qualities of his Zeal.*

THe design of advancing the Salvation of mens Souls is attended in this world with much doing, and much suffering. It is necessary therefore for him that undertakes the task, to fortifie himself with courage and patience: And both these, were most eminently in Monsieur Renty; being in the first place full of courage, resolute and laborious, imploying his body, as if he had two more in reserve when that was spent, dispatching more business in one half hour, than others would have done in many days: Very stout he was to undergo any difficulties, and withal, very quick and decisive.

A certain Lady of Note, made him her Executor, having disposed in her Will very much to pious uses: He was informed that her Friends, being persons of eminent power, were displeased therewith. To which he replied with a truly Christian courage and magnanimity, I never moved the Lady to bestow any of her Estate this way; but since her Piety hath prompted her thereunto, I shall spare no pains therein, nor be dismayd with any power that shall oppose it: My care shall be to perform her Will, and for other things I take no thought; for if it come to a matter of Law, I shall be ready to plead it, both in behalf of the Poor, whose Solicitor I am; and for her sake also, in her state of sufferance, if she be yet therein.

His zeal was ever still backed with courage, with-
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out the least hesitancy, where the honour of God, and good of his Neighbour were concerned. Entering one day, some Gentlemen engaged in a quarrel with their swords, drawn, and in sight and to kill on another, he resolutely threw himself in the midst of them, laying hold on those who seemed most outrageous. They begun to quarrel with him; but finding him resolutely bent to part the Fray, and to hazard his own life, for saving of theirs, were suddenly pacified, and listned to his sober Counsel, who took up the Quarrel upon the place.

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Meeting with a man whom some Huguenots had perverted, and taken along with them to *Charenton*; who was resolved likewise to force his Wife to the same place, and opinions: He fell into discourse with him, endeavouring, at least, to prevent any such violent course with his Wife. The man entertained him very rudely, both with neglect of his advice, and obloquy. But this holy man suffering his cholar and fury to spend themselves, brought him at length, by his wonted sweet behaviour, to a calmer temper, convinc'd him of his blindness and errors into which he had thrown himself headlong, and after several visits, confirmed him in the Catholick Verity. Finally, meeting with the principal Party that perverted him, threatened him with the Law, in case he persisted in his course; having respect to others also, whom he had dealt withal in the like kind; Thus his zeal frustrated the others designs, and established this Family in their former Religion.

Secondly, his zeal was accompanied with unparalleled Patience, a vertue very requisite for him, that would render himself capable to do good to others,

seeing he must endeavour to win their hearts, at which he is to make his first entrance, applying himself to their inclinations and humours, which in very many, prove difficult and untoward; and not following his own, but subduing his Passions, and renouncing his own Will, insinuating himself after a sort into their dispositions, and being, as it were, changed and metamorphosed into them; as St. Paul saith of himself, waiting long and patiently for their conversion; and attending (without being tired or discouraged, notwithstanding that he finds by all his travels, he wins but little ground) the times and the moments wherein they may profit, and yield to his motives all which qualities are not acquirable, without great violence offered to ones self, without much suffering and great mortification. To whom therefore may well be applied these words of our Saviour, *That grain which thou sowest, if it dye not, remaineth fruitless; but if it dye, it sprouteth, and bringeth forth much fruit.* To the end therefore that we may bring forth fruit amongst men, we must dye to our selves, and with this holy man, be indued with zeal and patience, to bear with meakness, and great pains of body and mind, in those charitable employments; undergoing the importunities, complaints, passions, the repulses, the contempts and injuries which often are met with in the business.

One day he visited a person, who out of jealousie and groundless inspiation, had cruelly used his wife, and given her a wound with a knife; who understanding his business, entertained him very courteously, lifting up his hand to strike him, belching out uncivil language, and offering to thrust him

him out of doors. Monsieur *Renty* took all this patiently, not replying one word: But after some time, he drew near again, and embraced him, and accosted him with such soft language, that he was perswaded by him at length to go to Confession, which he had not done in twelye years before; and in fine, reconciled him fully to his wife, and so lived and dyed a good Christian.

Another time he went to see a poor old man that lay sick, whom he boarded with his ordinary discourse of things concerning his Salvation: But the old man, whom age, sickness and want, had rendred very crabbed, instead of listning to him, fell into passion, telling him that he understood those things better than he; and if he would hearken, he would instruct him himself. Monsieur *Renty* answered, with all his heart; and after a great deal of patience and attention, prudently taking advantage from some things in that impertinent and weak discourse, to convince and inform him better, proceeded so happily, that he brought him to go to Confession. and the rest of his days to take great care of his soules health:

We may add hereunto, his wonderful discretion concerning the faults of others, wherein he exercised great Patience and Courage: Patience, I say, in bearing with them, and Courage in admonishing and correcting them.

A certain zealous Ecclesiastical person, did by Letter request his advice and assistance, in redressing some scandalous faults that were committed near him; and remained unpunished. To whom he answered, he must have recourse to God by his prayers, to procure of his goodness, illumination
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for those sinners, and grace to mend their lives; adding withal, how hard a thing it was to redress such Evils; for our Saviour himself, whilst he was upon Earth, did not take away all Sins, and so must we be constrained to leave many behind us, which God permitteth sometime to be, as well for the exercising and purging of the Good, as for the punishment of the Bad.

The same Party advertising him of two other things; the one, of some considerable Faults he had noted in a Priest, that took upon him the Charge of Souls: The other, how a Canon had struck one of the Fathers of the Mission, who had reprov'd him deservedly for a Fault. To him he wrote back thus:

‘ I humbly thank you for your pains in informing
‘ me of what passed concerning the Missioners. Ye
‘ are all fellow-servants of one God, and know how
‘ to reverence those Graces of God, ye see in one ano-
‘ ther; neither are ignorant, how that St. Peter, tho’
‘ an Apostle, and full of Graces, was found culpable,
‘ as St. Paul tells us: We must therefore excuse the
‘ Faults of our Neighbour, and lay them under our
‘ Feet. The Work of God that Acteth in the
‘ heart, receiveth its Testimony from a Self-Annihila-
‘ tion, manifested by the Patience and Charity of
‘ the Saints, in Exterior Actions: Beg ye the increase
‘ of these Graces for those that want them. It was
‘ very Scandalous for one Priest to strike another;
‘ But we know, that Priests put our Saviour to death,
‘ and we have too many in these days of that Functi-
‘ on, who hold more of the Old-Law than the New,
‘ which consisteth in the Alliance and Union of Cha-
‘ rity with Jesus Christ.

His Patience likewise in bearing with the Faults and Imperfections of others, was very exemplary; still extenuating them with some word of mitigation, and excusing and covering them with Charity, if it were possible. Being told of one that had put a Cheat upon him in a Business of small concernment, belonging to his Law-Suit at *Dijon*, he straightway covered the fault, and by an Act of Humility said, it is I that continually Cheat my God; then changed the Discourse to another Business: In this he looked upon the Example of God, and his Son our Saviour, who infinitely hating of Sin, and shedding his Blood for the destruction of it; notwithstanding, daily to suffer such an innumerable multitude of most Enormous Sinners, with so great Patience and Forbearance: Neither was this his Patience and Connivance at Faults, without the design to Correct them, as much as he could, which he managed with great Prudence and Courage.

When ever he intended to reprove another, he commonly in the first place accused himself, the better to dispose their Spirit, by the Example of his own Humility, and the setting forth of his Weakness, to receive his Sayings; and afterwards requested the same Christian Office from them back again: All which he performed in such a graceful way, that there be many who received good, and retain the memory of it to this day.

Having one day a design to Admonish one, he began a Discourse of that Unity of Spirits, and Freedom of Hearts, that ought to be amongst Christians, in telling one another the very Truths. For want of which, we are Ignorant of them, and so grow gray in our Vices, and carry them along with

with us to our Graves. And therefore, that he should hold himself extreamly obliged, if any one would perform toward him this Charity. The other finding his Heart exceedingly softened with this Discourse, besought him to deal freely and plainly with him, in telling him, whatsoever in him he saw amiss, which thing then he did.

When he had to deal with stubborn Sinners, his Language was sharp and severe; knowing when it was fit to yield, and when to reprove sharply. And his Counsel to a Friend concerning a third Party, was this:

Take heed of humbling your self before that man, such abusing of your self in this Case, will both prejudice him, and the Cause of God. Reprove him severely and roundly.

He put a great difference betwixt Christian Patience in our own Concernments, and Fortitude requisite in the things of God, and the good of our Neighbour, and for the worthy preserving of our just Authority.

§. 8. *Two other qualities of his Zeal.*

THese two qualities likewise accompanied his Zeal, Freedom and Prudence: For although his great Humility, of which we have formerly spoken, hath robbed us of the knowledge of many, and most profitable things he did, and caused him to conceal many of his inward Graces, and outward Actions, yet did his Zeal bring many of them to light, and compel him to manifest them in a Sincere, Charitable, and Holy Simplicity, where he saw it necessary

necessary for the glory of God, and good of his Neighbour; as we may gather from some Memorials we have from him. According to which Necessary, and that Spirit of Charity, sometime he spake directly of himself, and sometime in a third person (as St. Paul of his own Revelations:) To which purposely, see how well and fitly he wrote, in the Year 1649. to a Vertuous Lady:

Give me leave, Madam, to declare unto you my Thoughts concerning that Liberty we ought to use, in communicating freely the Gifts of God bestowed on us, to such Persons as may reap fruit from them; not stifling within our selves what we receive from above, whereby we obstruct a second fruit which God expects from his Graces: Which is, after our receiving good from them, to communicate them to others, with Charity and Discretion: Improving them, like good Seed sown in good Ground, bringing forth abundance of Fruit. I wish that we would consider our selves, set in this World, as a Chrystal, which placed in the middle of the Universe, would give free passage to all that Light it receives from above: And that by good Example, by a high Estimate set on Vertue, by discountenancing of Vice, by comforting others, by Pious Converse, we would impart those Talents we have received from Heaven, to all Creatures; and this without disguise, or the least claim of Propriety. Giving obedience and passage to them, as the Chrystal to Light.

Furthermore, that all those Honours and Commendations which we receive from below, should freely pass through us again up to God, without making any stay with us. No otherwise than the Chrystal transmits the beams of several Torches set under it, purifying, and darting them, more sparkling towards Heaven: for this indeed is our bounden duty, to render unto God, all that Honour and Praise,

Praise, we receive from Men, who alone is worthy of all Honour and Glory. And who hath therefore bestowed upon us such things as are Praise-worthy; not that the Praise thereof should rest upon us, but pass thorow us towards him, that he may be Blessed and Praised in all things.

Moreover it is observable, if nothing be opposed to the Chrystal, to receive that Light which passeth thorow it, it appeareth not at all: And though the Sun bestoweth his beams from above, and the Torcheth their flames from below, yet these, for want of a reflection, remain only imperceptible in the Chrystal. In like manner, though we receive the Heavenly Light, and abundance of Graces, if we make no Approaches to God and our Neighbour, by rendering to the One what is His due, and to the other what is Charitable; it may be we have a Light, but that's only in our selves, and hidden under a Bushel: Which being so straitly Confin'd, cannot produce its Effect of Communication, and is in danger in a short time to be shak'd and extinct.

Consider also, that when the Sun shineth upon a clear Chrystal, there is not any corporeal thing more capable of that Lustre, or that receives its beams with so great splendour. Moreover, betwixt it and the Sun no Light is seen, but after it hath pass'd thorow the Chrystal, it becomes bright and glorious, and also burns according to the figure to which it is disposed: To shew us, that what passeth betwixt God and us, is a work only of the Closet, which ought not to appear abroad untill it hath pass'd thorow us to others.

Let us then suffer our selves to be penetrated by the Graces of God, that after their beams have lightned and warmed us, they may afford the like to all about us: Let us imitate that clear Chrystal, which composed of solid matter, yet gives free passage only to the Light; let us, like

like it, be impenetrable to all, but what proceeds from God, and returns to him. Let us not, as we commonly do, descend to the appetites of sense, and lust inordinately after earthly things, which is to cast dirt upon the Chrystal; whereby that which is clear in it self, by reason of that filth that invirones it, is no more capable of light, than is the dirt upon it: And if we will restore it to its former transparency and penetrability, we must wash it well: I mean, our polluted, souls, in the clear waters of repentance.

Let us finally, offer up our selves to our blessed Saviour, that we be not defective in the right use of his graces which he bestows upon us, neither for our selves nor for others, that we bury not his talents: Imitating likewise herein the Chrystal, which is first penetrated by light onely, and then scatereth it abroad: Let us appear without a Mask before the face of all the world, speaking aloud, both by the mouth of our actions, with the Spouse in the Canticles, My Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds; and by our example and diligence, encrease the number of those souls that thus love, opening and making plain the way of love: For ever blessed be the God of love, in whom I am, &c.

By this Letter we may perceive, that notwithstanding the design of his Humility to hide those gifts and graces he had received: yet his zeal often caused him to bring them to light when the glory of God, and good of his Neighbour might be promoted thereby. And yet this he managed with admirable prudence, that though his zeal was free, y^e: not so indiscreet, as to be its own Herald upon every appearance of doing good; but was very circumspect, weighing all circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, and Necessity. Wherefore

fore in the same Letter, he gave this sage advice to that Lady, touching the order and measure which are necessary to be observed in this communication :

To some we must lay open our hearts more freely and exactly, to others more reservedly, keeping aloof off, and beating about the bush; to others altogether lockt up, concealing those secrets from them, in whom we see no disposition at all to make good use of them.

One of the most necessary qualities of this zeal, whereby to render it profitable, and prevent many miscarriages, is, that it be well seasoned with discretion and prudence, to consider things well, and execute them in the best manner : To foresee, and prevent mischiefs, and redress them in time, when they have hapned, applying such efficacious remedies ; as may have as much of sweetness, and as little of acrimony as may be : And in desperate cases, or where the cure would prove worse than the disease ; to suffer, and dissemble them ; as we do in those of the body ; viz. Blindness, lameness, and crookedness ; souls having sometimes some certain defects, which are, as it were, incorrigible ; which God suffers often, thereby to save and perfect through humility, those that are infected therewith ; and others likewise who deal with them by their patience and charity.

Thus was Monsieur Renty both by grace and nature very prudent and advised : His zeal made up with all these perfections, and guided its self every where with these illuminations. One writing to him to procure a pardon for a young Gentleman who had committed murder ; his mother promising in lieu of that favour eight hundred
pounds

pound Sterling, to be imployed in works of Piety and Alms. In his first answer, he desired to be informed, whether the party was truly penitent for his fault. In the second he writ thus:

I cannot perswade my self to stir in this business, because it would seem, that un'er the pretence of Alms, impunity is aimed at: I am not willing to foul my hands with the price of blood. In a word, although others undertake the business without scruple and I see very considerable Alms that would come of it; yet for all that, I cannot afford my assistance. The Divine Providence will never forget his bly poor ones.

One great point of prudence requisite in a zealous man, is not to overthrow his body with excessive travel, nor overcharge his mind with too much business, which by their number and weight may choak his devotions: but so to have a care of the salvation of others, as not thereby to neglect his own: but according to his strength to proportion, what ought to be, both to the one and other. Concerning the first of these, he expressed himself thus to a Clergy man, upon occasion of some distemper he had contracted with extraordinary pains in his Mission:

Give me leave, Sir, to deal plainly with you in telling you, that amongst those many cares I have for you; this is the least, that I would not have you impose too much upon your self; and for want of moderation, to render your self altogether unservicable. The enemy usually takes a small advantage of such free and well disposed natures. You are not herein your own, but a man for the whole world; and, with St. Paul, a debtor to all men; preserve your self therefore, not so much, I mean, by making much, but by forbearing to destroy your self by labours and

travel: I am told how greatly your endeavours are blessed; give me leave from that interest my self challengeth therein, with all humility and respect, to admonish you thus much.

Concerning the second, touching our own salvation, he had a special regard hereto, managing those affairs which belonged to the good of his neighbour, by the rules of a well ordered Charity, which in this case begins at home; indispensably performing all his Exercises of Devotion, and reserving a considerable part both of the day and night for his conversing with God, and prayer; yea, as he passed to and fro in the day time in the street, he often went into the Churches remaining there whole hours together, before the B. Sacrament, when his occasions would any way permit; and especially toward his latter end, as his employments increased, so was he in continual recollection; from which neither his business, nor any exterior objects did distract him: Whereupon a most familiar friend asking him, whether in that great throng of business, he observed his usual two hours of prayer. He answered, when I can, I keep three hours, sometimes four or five; but when occasion is offered to serve my neighbour, I easily quit them, for God of his mercy hath given me the grace, to be inseparably with him, even in the crowd of business.

S. 9. *The success which God gave to
his zeal.*

GOD indued this his servant, with such a powerful vertue for the good of his Neighbour, that not only his words and actions, but even his very presence, made impression upon others for their eternal good. So that one familiarly acquainted with him, said, that he believed him to be indued with an Apostolick spirit; for as the Apostles received the grace, to inkindle the life of Faith, and fire of Charity, and set up the Kingdom of God in all Countreys and places where the Divine Majestie sent them; in like manner was Monsieur Renry, even far beyond the bounds of his condition, filled with grace, and assisted by Divine Power, in all the Cities, Villages, Private houses, as well Religious as Secular, whither the Divine Providence conducted him, to enlighten men with the knowledge of God and his Son Christ Jesus, To inkindle in their hearts perfect Charity, and bring them to a good life. In all which he was exceedingly blessed with happy success, as shall be shewed hereafter.

Being one day at Paris in the time of Lent, going to a poor mans house, to exercise some of his ordinary acts of Charity; and hearing a great noise of people, singing and dancing in the next house, he left his poor man, and went in thither, and look'd upon them, who were so surprized and astonished at his presence, that they presently quitted their dancing

ing and singing: And he fell into a discourse against those disorders and dissoluteness in that holy time of *Lent*, with such fervour, as drew tears from their eyes, and wrought so effectually upon some of them, that the next day they went to Confession.

— Another time, he visited a poor maid, who being abused by a young man, and gotten with Child, was left in great necessity; whom he found plunged in to deep a melancholy, that she had resolved to make away her self; yet by the grace and power, which God gave to his good counsel, he comforted her dejected spirits, and brought her into such a condition, that she went to Confession. After this he went to seek out the young man, who at the first onset behaved himself very ill, contemning his wholesome advice: But after several arguments, enforced from the danger of his soul, and other threatnings of Gods Judgments hanging over his head; he melted into tears, promising to do whatever he pleased to command him; insomuch, that by his advice, he was reconciled to God by true repentance, and to the maid by wedlock, and since that time have led a good life together.

During his abode at *Amiens*, a poor woman had undone herself by selling salt (a thing forbidden in *France*, under heavy penalties) and being taken in it: Who thereupon fell into an excessive sadness and grief, retaining also such an hatred against them that had reduced her to this misery, that she could not be persuaded upon any terms to forgive them; whereby she became incapable of the Sacraments, in the extremity of her sickness. Monsieur *Lafite* was brought to her, in the company

of two or three other persons, who talked with her a long time without any success. Inſomuch, that ſeeing whatever he ſaid prevailed nothing, fell upon his knees, in the middle of the room, inviting the company to do the like; and after ſome few prayers, beſpoke the ſick party ſaying, and will not you joyn with us, to beg mercy of God? To which ſhe yielding, he cauſed her to repeat after him word by word, certain acts of repentance and Charity; by which ſhe found her mind ſo ſtrangely altered, that ſhe appeared quite another woman; and openly profeſſed, that ſhe did forgive them from her heart: And receiving with much meekneſs all his inſtructions, prepar'd herſelf to the worthy receiving of the Sacraments.

Being one day at the great Hoſpital in *Paris*, inſtructing the ſick how to diſpoſe themſelves for a general Confellion; one of the Religious women intreated him to ſpeak with a perſon that was newly brought in thither; who had been without any caule at all, run thorow the body with a ſword, and was ſo incenſed againſt the party, that he could not indure with patience, any ſhould ſpeak of forgiving him. But no ſooner did *Monsieur Renty* urge to him, the duty of a good Chriſtian in ſuch a caſe, with other ſpeeches to pacifie and ſweeten his ſpirit, but he was appeaſed, and ſaid, he forgave him with a'l his heart; asking, that he was ready both to ſee and embrace him, expreſſing moreover, very much ſenſe of Piety.

Certain Abbots, and other Eccleſiaſticks of quality and vertue met at *Pontuſe* to ſettle a Miſſion: *Monsieur Renty*, who was very intimately acquainted with the moſt part of them, came to viſit

them; where, according to his usual custom, without speaking thereof to any one, he went to the prison, and meeting there with a most obstinate sinner, who had continued so along time, and neither by intreaty nor threatening, by fair means nor foul, nor by any other means which the Mission could use, be brought to Confession.

The mission sending for Monsieur *Renty* to dine with them, word was brought, after much search for him, that they might happily meet with him at the Prison; where he was found sitting at the table with the Prisoners, for whom he had provided a dinner, discoursing lovingly with them, comforting and stirring them up to a good life. Amongst the rest, the foresaid party in particular, upon whom he had the greatest design; to whom he spake with so much power, dealing with him so discreetly, or divinely rather, that he brought him to his bent, working in him a resolution effectually to change his life, and make a good confession of all his sins: which gave a just occasion to one of the Mission to say, That Monsieur *Renty* had accomplished that in three days, which others would have had much ado to have brought about in three years.

I omit many others of the like kinde, concluding with this one, which seems very remarkable. He was requested to visit a devout woman, who was tormented with excessive pains both inward and outward, and had great need of comfort and direction; who received so great relief from his instructions, that within some few days she was as followeth, The effects which I found by the conference I had with this worthy servant of God

was such, that as soon as I had gotten victory over my self to speak, and lay open my heart unto him, straightway my blessed Saviour communicated his goodness so powerfully to me, that I was even peirc'd by the affects of his presence: I found also a very particular assistance from the blessed Virgin, whom this holy man did invoke at the beginning of our discourse. And I can assure you of a truth, that I was sensible of much comfort and ease of my affliction; insomuch, that his speeches had so great an influence upon my soul; and wrought so effectually that I have continued ever since in a good condition. And though my pains are not abated, yet I finde such an alteration in my self, that I seem to be no more my own, but all that is within me, breatheth after nothing but the Execution of the will of God, and the accomplishment of his good pleasure at any rate. And though nature suffers some difficulty in it, yet she must now learn to yield to grace, and make resistance no longer. My torments are not changed, and yet I profess to suffer nothing, because I am very well content to suffer: And although my inferiour sensitive parts is much pained, yet my superiour part cannot; nor indeed is it capable of suffering, by reason of its conformity to the will of God. All my care, during this time of resignation of my self to sufferings, is to make good use of my affliction, and endeavour after solid vertue, with a perfect abandoning of my self to the will of God.

Behold here the blessings of God upon his endeavours for the good of his Neighbours; which working such strong impressions upon their hearts,

to bring them to God, almost always accompanied his labours: At which indeed we ought not much to wonder, if we consider him as a happy instrument, fastned and united to the Lord of hearts, and Saviour of souls; singly aiming at the glory of God, and good of others, and sparing nothing he conceived necessary thereunto. To which purpose his custom was, before he undertook any (such business, to give himself up to our Lord they are his own words) to speak by his Spirit, and in his Power.

And this Lord (who desireth infinitely the Salvation of man) finding him so well disposed, and fitted to his hand, used him for noble employments, and furnished him with suitable graces and favours, even to work wonders. Which may serve both for the instruction and shame of such, who by their calling are designed for the procuring of the Salvation of men, and yet through their own faults, do it with so little profit.

I find moreover, that God gave him sometimes before-hand knowledge and foresight into the affairs which he would have him do, thereby to prepare him to undertake them without fear, and to acquit himself well therein. Being at his house in *City*, at the latter end of the year 1642. he had a secret intimation from God, that at his return to *Paris*, he should find a new employment about the poor, and should be much taken up therein: Which fell out accordingly; two days after his arrival there, certain persons coming to advise with him, about a course to relieve such poor as were ashamed to beg, throughout that *City*, intreating him to take it into his care: which he

did accordingly, undertaking for his share, to visit the fourth part, and distribute there alms according to their necessities, which was a sufficient employment for one man, to take up his whole time, though he had no other business; which yet he performed, notwithstanding the multitude of his other occupations; so that we may say that according to humane reason, and without a special assistance from God, he could never have been able to have done and suffered such great matters: But God, who hath given us a limited strength of body and mind, can as easily heighten them, when, and how he pleaseth.

One day he said to one of his great Confidants with much humility and devotion:

I have been this night bathed all over in tears, by a view which our Lord hath given me. At which words making a stand, remaining sometime recollected in silence, and transported with that grace he had received, afterward he went on, saying, *that whilst he was at prayer, he understood that there was a great employment assigned him for new France in the Indies.*

Which afterwards fell out, and chiefly in the building of a Church in the Island of Mount-real: In which noble design; other pious persons, whom God had chosen thereunto, joining with him; He by his cares, counsels, credit, and liberality both of his own, and what he begg'd from others, was highly serviceable.

Sometime he received beforehand, not so great light of his business, but only a bare knowledge, and present impulse of doing something, without any further discovery: As, when he was much pressed in Spirit to go to Pontois, without under-
standing

standing any reason for it, having at the same time much imployment at *Paris*; yet with obedience to the inspiration, without debating he undertaketh the journey; where unexpectedly he met with a Nobleman of great quality, from a Province far distant; who came thither, conducted by God, to ask of Monsieur *Renty*, and receive from his mouth instructions for his souls health, and how to serve God perfectly which he had little known, and less practised: Which thing Monsieur *Renty*, then taught him; professing at his return from thence, that he could give no account, what afterward became of the party, or how he lost him.

§. 10. *His grace in assisting particularly some choice souls.*

THOUGH this great servant of God, had an excellent faculty in assisting all men for the good of their souls; yet was he more eminently happy, in some particular choice persons, to whom our Saviour had assigned him, for the curing of their Imperfections, to make them march on apace, and that thorow the narrow way of vertue and perfection. But because the greatest number of these are yet living, whose modesty I dare not offend, I shall speak something onely of some who are dead; and chiefly of one person, which may serve as a taste of all the rest.

This was the Countess of *Chastres*; who being deeply

deeply in the affections of this world, according to the custom of most young Ladies of her Quality; it pleased God, out of his infinite Love to her, to bring her before her death, from those vanities, and conduct her by the thorny strait-way, to the paths of vertue and high perfection; for which great work Monsieur *Renty* was assigned from God: He inspiring the one, to request assistance and counsel, and the other to afford it; and this with so happy success, that within less than a years space, her advancement herein was so notable, that he himself was astonished at it: For in that short time, she became so perfectly disingaged from all these petty conveniences and accomodations, which our Ladies (flattering themselves) pretend still to have need of; that one presenting her with something of that nature, wherein she had formerly taken delight, she returned this answer, which may serve for a good lesson to us all (especially if we consider that she was well known, to be of a very delicate, tender Complexion, and very sickly) how apt we are to multiply necessities, I thank God, I have quitted this, and far more other things, For the love of God, and yet find no want at all, It is true, that nature of her self is daintry, and prone to flatter her self, upon the pretence of necessities, which she is willing to apprehend much greater than truly they are; and often maketh them such, by her Imagination.

God indued him with great grace and light, to discern her proper way, and to perswade her to follow it; to advance her in the paths of solid vertue, and to teach her by degrees to dye to herself; to support her in great interior afflictions, and
to

instruct her very effectually, in what was most proper for her present condition; he being accomplished with all the qualities of a fit Director, and she on her part, perfectly resigning up her self, to believe what he said, and force her self to put it in execution: A thing very requisite in those, that resolve to make use of the conduct of others to good purpose. She received his counsel, with all the resignation she could, imagining our Saviour to speak to her by his mouth; which really was not without cause, if we duly consider the passage I shall now relate.

The Lady speaking to him one day, about procuring some relief of a most pressing excessive pain, with which her spirit was afflicted; and not finding any comfort from whatsoever he said, she was moved to cast her self down upon her knees, to deliver up her own will to our Saviour, and by a perfect resignation, to enter into what designs his good pleasure had decreed concerning her; which she did accordingly: And after rising from her knees, she no more beheld monsieur Renty, but in him our B. Saviour, shining with a very great splendor, and saying to her, do what my servant directs thee: Which words, at that very instant, wrought such a wholesome and divine effect upon her, that her pain vanished, she remaining filled with God, enjoying a perfect tranquillity of spirit, accompanied with a lively repentance for her sins, and an absolute contempt of the world, and of herself.

Though this happy intercourse betwixt him and this Lady; accompanied with such signal blessings from God, had contracted a strict and perfect amity

amity betwixt them, yet he was very wary, wise, and reserved in his addresses, visiting her only when the work of God did require, and making no longer stay nor discourse with her, than what was precisely necessary: Which the Lady thinking to be a little harsh, bemoan'd to a friend, whom she knew to have some power with this holy man, in these words, Monsieur Renty doth extremely mortifie me with his civilities and reservedness. I have great need to see him often, and yet cannot obtain it: yea, when we are together, he will not sit down, except it be when I am sick, or that I am not able to stand any longer; and always with his hat in his hand. I beseech you tell him, what out of that great respect I owe him, I dare not my self, what pain and inquietude I suffer, to see such his carriage toward me; who ought to be continually under his feet.

The party acquainted him with thus much, and received this answer:

I proceed in this manner, because my duty to God, and to the Countess of Chastres require it; and moreover, since my Saviour doth oblige me to treat with her, I must do no more than what is necessary, and so retire, to which this posture is most convenient. If we sit down, we should forget our selves, and talk more than is needful, and perhaps pass on to things unprofitable: Wherefore we both ought to stand upon our guard. I being a lay man and a sinner do not speak to her but with great confusion, though I know it to be the will of God, and am certified by several pious and judicious men, that it is my duty.

Those that undertake conduct of souls, ought seriously to order this prudent answer, and persuade

swade themselves, that the business consists not in speaking much to them, but in disposing them to speak to God, and in making them fit for God to speak to them; to beget in their souls the substantial word, his Son: And after wholefom counsel given, consonant to their state and disposition, in putting them upon its execution with good courage; virtue consisting not in words, but deeds.

Thus you have the course he took in directing this Lady; who thereby arrived to great perfection, making most excellent use of all her great sufferings of body and mind; attaining to so great contempt of the world, that she dyed with a design (notwithstanding her great infirmities and sickness) to become a Carmelite, in the Monastery of *Beaulieu*.

And that we may have a taste of his skill in conducting several other persons of great virtue, let us consider these following Rules of great Perfection, which he gave to them; and which, without doubt, were drawn from his own private observation.

I have protested in the presence of the blessed Sacrament, that I will live according to the Maxims and Counsels of Jesus Christ; and to that end:

1. Never to desire to endeavour, directly or indirectly, to increase my fortune in riches of honour, neither to consent to any advantage, which my friends would procure for me, unless in obedience to, and advice of my Ghostly Father and Director of my Conscience.

2. To study the contempt and hatred of worldly riches and honours, to speak of them no longer according to the flesh, but according to the spirit

of Christianity; and for the better establishing of its Maxims in my soul, to avoid, as much as I can, the conversation of such, as are guided by contrary Rules.

3. To entertain no Suit in Law, either as Plaintiff or Defendant, untill all possible ways have been used for an accomodation, without any humane respect: In which I will submit to advice.

4. To cut off all superfluities, as well in what concerneth my own person, as my family, that I may be the better enabled to assist the poor: For the better execution whereof, I will once every Month, after Communion, examine my self therein, as strictly, as if I were then to give an account to God.

5. Never to contest, but to yield to all the world, as much as I can, both in point of Honour Precedency, and of Opinion, Dispute, and of another Will, which I ought to preferre before my own.

6. To shun all delicacies, not to do, or desire any thing, upon the motive of pleasure; nor to admit of any such thing, unless it be joyned with necessity, or condescension to my Neighbour, or the health of my body, or the refreshment and relaxation of Spirit.

7. To bear with Patience, Contempt, Injures, Contradictions, Losses, Oppressions and Affronts.

8. To do all, that with discreet zeal I can, to hinder others from offending God, or blaspheming his Holy Name, or detracting or slandering their Neighbour.

9. To avoid and reject all kind of tenderness and delicacy for the ease of the body; yea, to diminish and cut off, as much as I can, such commodities

modities and conveniences as may be forborn, without danger of health.

10. To receive with all readiness and Charity the requests of my neighbour, and to supply his necessities, in what I can possibly, by my self, or by others.

11. To perform the duty of Fraternal correction with all Charity and Humility, in the most prudent manner I can, and to receive it most willingly from others.

12. Once every Month, at least, I will examine my self upon the faults I have committed against these present Resolutions: And once a year many may meet together; to renew this Protestation; and advise together of the way and means to accomplish it.

§. 11. The great skill be had in the Interior matters of the Soul.

WE must of necessity confess, that the knowledge of Interior things is most difficult, and that the discerning of Spirits, is, without contradiction, the most obscure of all Sciences: And to be acquainted therewith; requires eminent grace from God, and a light no less, than what flows from the Sun of Righteousness: For, if the skill of curing the body be difficult. and only conjectural, by reason that we are guided therein by Exterior Signs, which often prove ambiguous and equivocal (whereupon the most expert Physicians find themselves frequently mistaken; and prescribe quite

quite contrary remedies) how much more must the skill of governing Souls, in the matter of their salvation, which are spiritual and remote from sense, yea and supernatural, be attended with great difficulties, and involved in wonderful obscurity.

But Monsieur Renty proved very skillful herein, having received a wonderful light from God, to search out the mysterious secrets, and understand the most abstruse windings of Souls, in which his own experience was no small advantage to him: His more than ordinary light served him to discern truth from falshood, the safe from dangerous, the motions of a good spirit, from those of the Evil one, to bring disquieted souls to their repose, to fortifie and encourage them, to disengage them from all worldly things, and to unite them to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and by him to the Divinity to be guided in all things by his Holy Spirit.

I shall here present you with a taste of this excellent skill, and some beams of this Divine light in these matters, which I found amongst his Papers, under his own hand, which may give great insight into the mysteries of a Spiritual life.

There be (saith he in those Papers) three kinds of devotions and groanings of the Soul after God, about which she ought constantly to be busied, to enable her to accomplish the Precepts of our Saviour; that is, to pray always and never to slack this holy Exercise, lest she fall into oblivion of God, and after that into sin.

The first is the elevation and groaning of the Penitents, who begin at the Purgative way. The second is of the Believers, who have proceeded to, and do practise the Illuminative. And the third is of the Perfect, who are arrived at the Unitive. O The

The first are exercised in the renouncing of sin, and the vanities of the world, in bewailing their former life, and seeking God, sending forth from the depth of fear and reverence, their groans and sighs to him, which is the beginning of life eternal.

The Believers seek after the knowledge of his will, by his Word, which is his Son, desiring to conform their lives after his Example, who is our Way, our Life and Truth: And this is the progress of this life. The Perfect grow in the presence of God, after an Union with him, in imitation of our Saviour, exercising it by acts of love, and so fulfilling the first and great Commandment, in which consisteth the perfection of our life here below.

There are some Souls in the first estate, who renouncing sin, and quitting the vanities of the world, receive great sensible consolations from God, and taste ravishing delights. But if they endeavour not to pass on to the second, to understand and practise the will of God in his Son, the Devil will soon deceive them by this bait, causing them to rest in the complacency of these gifts: So that not making progress in Christ, who is their way, they will wander into bypaths, to the danger of a precipice: Their condition being a kind of imperfect, floating self-denial, and desiring to be for God, to do his will, and love him with a false Interior peace, upon which they rest, and whence afterwards they degenerate into a very dangerous condition, because they are not truly grounded upon Jesus Christ, whom God hath appointed for our sole Guide.

But if after they are thus purged from the gross affections of the world, they be not likewise purified from themselves, giving up all to Christ Jesus, with a serious resolution to imitate him; and enter into his Sacrifice of Self-annihilation: Instead of receiving the Spirit of God, they shall consume themselves in their own, and form

in themselves false illuminations, shall be guided by their own sense, and by what their own corrupt nature suggests to them, a glittering and pleasing, with great danger of falling headlong into the errors of the Enthusiasts; who persuade themselves, that every thing that occurs to their fancy, comes from God: Out of an opinion, that they neither will, nor seek, nor love any thing but God, and so become little or nothing at all sensible of the checks of their own Conscience.

If you observe those that begin their Spiritual life in this manner, you will find them to have little faith or dependence on Christ Jesus. And if you ask them what they desire, or whither to they tend? they will answer in general, To whatsoever God will have. It will be necessary to set these right, and if they be not too far gone with these gusts, and sensible consolations, to carry them to desire indeed what God will have, but desire it according to the model of our Saviour and the precepts of his Gospel (which he hath left us as his Will and Testament, and to be our Light, and the Rule of our enlightnings.)

We have many who rest in this first step, being yet deceived and admired, even by persons who pass for spiritual, and often by their Ghostly Directors, calling this the mystical way. In which notwithstanding, the deceitful spirit of Nature and the Devil, play their game, under the mask of these dark illuminations, of these false paces, of these quaint terms, high words, and mysterious means, of these volumes of spiritual writings (the fruits whereof are for the most part in the paper) from whence is seen so often, that those who have begun well, and with much purity, do fall afterwards into gross faults; Lust, Property and Self pleasing steal into the soul in the name of Christ Jesus.

We have others, which heed no other thing than the

preaching of John Baptist, by their Austerities and Penances, setting up their rest here, without proceeding on to Christ Jesus, to receive his Spirit; replying upon an inward satisfaction and confidence in their mortifications, and sticking there.

Others, so stay upon Jesus Christ only, as if he had no Father, having affectionate devotions to his Humanity, and much led by the sensible, go no further. They know Jesus Christ, but not Jesus Christ, God and man, who is our Life, Truth, and Way.

Others build all their hopes upon the Blessed Virgin, and other Saints, and their particular Devotions to them; which are very good, when they are grounded upon repentance for their sins, and a true conversion of the soul: But these grossly deceive themselves, by hoping of succour from the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, or of having any communion in their merits, when they quit not their own vicious courses.

These three estates, thus understood and distinguished, afford great light in the conduct of souls; whereby to understand their beginning, progress, and perfection, with the deviations they are subject unto. And every one of these estates, hath its proper work, its sufferance, and its prayer.

The work of the first estate of beginners and Penitents, is to find out all that inclineth to sin, that obstructeth our salvation, or withdraweth us from God, to avoid it. Their Cross or Sufferance is, to bewail their offences, to mortifie their passions, and subdue their body in any thing that makes it rebel against Reason and the Spirit; and also to punish the irregular motions of Concupiscence. Their prayer is, to beg grace and strength, for their performance of these things.

The work of the second, remedy of Believers, is, to
study

study Jesus Christ, his Life and Doctrine : Their Cross is, to bear the troubles that befall them in imitation of our Saviour, to suffer contempt and persecutions, which attend all such as follow him, Their prayer is, to beg his Life, his Spirit, and his frame of Soul; to act interiorly and exteriorly after his model.

The work of the third, and Perfect one, is, to do each thing by the Spirit of Christ, through their union with God : Their Cross is, in bearing with, as they ought, the corruptions, darkness and stupidity of this world, as also persecutions for righteousness, which thing shall never be wanting. Their prayer is, to ask continually, a more abundant participation of the Spirit of Christ, a more intimate union with God, a greater dying to themselves, a more faithful improving of his grace and talents received, with perseverance to the end.

Moreover, in the first estate, we must labour hard, in resisting of sin, in vanquishing our passions, and renouncing vanities; which young beginners cannot do, without many repeated acts, much violence to themselves. But those to whom God hath given an entrance into the two other states, do it easily, with a simple and facile guidance of their spirit, not diminishing their acts of humiliation, but hindering the oppression and trouble thereof.

In the second estate, is requisite on our parts, a vigorous correspondence in following Jesus Christ, not acting any more from our selves, but in him, in singleness of heart; and, enduring with patience and ingenuity, the purging and purifying of our spirits by Jesus Christ. In which work, we must be content, to suffer many secret tempests, and inward tumults, arising from the reluctancies of old habits, and our spirit stirred up by the motions of nature, full of many images and impressions. And finally, be content to lose our very souls with much patience, that

we may receive them again, clothed with Christ Jesus.

In the third estate, is contained a work of Passion, that is, of Prayer; where the bounty of God doth all, as it were, the soul tasting a certain experimental satiety of the presence and truth of God, and of his love in Jesus Christ, in which she reposeth. She finds herself often absorpt in the joy of the greatness, the power, the goodness, and the infinite perfections of God, of the alliance with his Son: his love, his manner of conversation, and the admirable effects, which the participation of his Spirit produceth, joining in the possession of these good things, with a tranquillity, content, and vigor, surpassing all sense and expression.

A good progress thorow the two former estates, makes way for the third; where we must be careful, considering the uncertainty and mutableness of our natures, to use great industry, to be sure of going forward, and of repeating also what we have done, the better to ground ourselves, and repair our losses.

Thus we have his insight into spiritual things, evidencing the great advancement of his illuminated Spirit, which God had enlightened in more than an ordinary manner, declaring unto him the designs he had upon souls: Giving him to penetrate into the obscurest recesses of their Consciences, and to discover what was most secret and hidden, to speak with words not studied and premeditated, but which were inspired, and put into his mouth at that hour, which proved most powerful and effectual.

In the year, 1644. A maid whom God had indued with pious affections, was desirous to become a Carmelite. She communicated her intentions to Monsieur Remy, begging his advice. Who at first, finding some difficulties in the business

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ness, judged it fitting for her, to think no more of it. Notwithstanding afterwards, God inspired him at his prayers with a very great certitude, that it was his will, she should proceed in the business, maugre all difficulties, pointing out to him the very place where the thing should be done. He informed her thereof, which she hearkened unto, with due respect, as if Christ himself had spoken unto her, and commanded her to enter into that Monastery, where she remains at this very day.

In the year 1647. having visited a person afflicted with great pains, who had need of such a man as he, he writ thus to his Director :

‘I have been with the party you know of, and have told her what I thought convenient to her condition. Our Saviour enlightened me to discover to her, his good pleasure concerning her, how that this sad and dark condition was not sent, to bring her to a stand and trouble at it, but to facilitate her way to perfection, and to carry her without amusement, to our Saviour Christ Jesus, who is our Sanctification.

‘I acquainted her, how we ought to lay this sure foundation, that our selves are nothing, but infirmity and misery it self : So that when any one tells us thereof, he tells us no news : And that God from this insufficiency of our selves, to all good, means to extract that excellent virtue of Humility and Diffidence of our selves, obliging us thereby to go to his Son our Saviour, to find strength in him, and remedy for all our miseries. I was much enlarged upon each thing which she told me, and God gave her so great

‘a plenitude of light and grace, that she spake
 ‘marvellous things touching the operation of the
 ‘Holy Trinity in her, with other excellent no-
 ‘tions, manifesting a very particular assistance of
 ‘his Divine Grace. In this estate I left her.

Concerning himself he addes thus:

‘As concerning my self, I have not much to say,
 ‘only I find within my self, through the mere-
 ‘cy of God, a great tranquillity in his presence;
 ‘through the Spirit of Christ Jesus, and such an
 ‘inward experience of Eternal Life, as I am not
 ‘able to express. And this is that whither I am
 ‘most bent and drawn: Yet I find my self so
 ‘strangely naked and barren, that I wonder at
 ‘the condition I am in, and by which I discourte:
 ‘For in my addresses to this party, I begun my
 ‘speech, not knowing how to pursue it; and after
 ‘the second sentence, I had not the least fore-
 ‘sight of what should be the third, and so of the
 ‘rest: Not but that I seem to have a perfect know-
 ‘lege of the things I speak in such a manner as
 ‘I am capable of it: But I only utter what is
 ‘given me, and in the same way as it is com-
 ‘municated, I communicate it to others. Which
 ‘done, there seems to remain nothing in me, but
 ‘the foundation from whence it springs.

He grew to so high a reputation in this know-
 ledge of soul matters, joyned with extraordinary
 graces, that many Ecclesiastical persons, and many
 Superiors of Religious Orders, and well governed
 Communities, thought themselves very happy in
 communicating with him, and following his ad-
 vice, in matters of great weight, being assured by
 undoubted signs, that he was replenished by the

Spirit

Spirit of God. And very many, both Ecclesiasticks and Seculars, of each Sex and quality, even such as were arrived to great perfection, sent to receive his instruction and assistance, in the conduct of their spiritual affairs.

In the year, 1641. he began particularly to apply himself to this way: But of all the employments our Saviour call'd him to for his service, there was none wherein he met with more pain, or more contradiction of his Spirit, than in this, judging himself most unworthy and incapable, resolving to proceed no further in it, notwithstanding his several impulses thereunto, without asking counsel: Which counsel, after good examination of the business, was this, that he ought to undertake it, and that it was the will of God. To which he submitted with exceeding great confusion and shame in himself, manifested by his countenance, words and behaviour, in his communication with the parties that asked his advice, yielding to their requests with very great humility and reverence; as all those can witness who knew him: And they likewise assuring themselves, that God resided, spake, and acted in him, and by him, remained in his presence with great respect, and relied most confidently upon his conduct.

And God made it evident, by his blessing and wonderful success upon his endeavours, that his actings herein were perfectly agreeable to his will: Teaching us hereby, that he hath no need of us for the execution of his designs; and that he serves himself of whom he thinks good, and many times of such a one, whom he finds well disposed, passing by those whom their vices render incapable:

uncapable: And the best preperation to be employed by God in great affairs, is, to abandon our selves wholly to his designs, and become very little in his own esteem, as this holy man was.

CHAP. III.

His outward behaviour and Conversation.

UNdoubtedly a mans outward compofure, and the whole oeconomy of his conversation, is of great consequence in the service of our Neighbours, either to further or hinder our design for their falvation, being that which only lies open to the eye, and makes the first and strongest impression upon their spirits; and either wins, or alienates them, according as it is well or ill ordered.

Whence it came to pass that Monsieur Remy, who had an ardent desire to assist his neighbour, and to procure to that purpose at any rate, whatever might be requisite thereto; did whatever he could, for the well composing of his exterior, dressing his demeanor, gestures, motions, looks, words, silence, and other parts of his Conversation, in such an harmony, as he conceived most suitable to draw his Neighbour to God: which he managed with such advantage, that we may say with truth, and the allowance of all that knew him, that in this point of good outward comportment, he was admirable, and that no man of long time hath been seen to go beyond him.

He was very modest, always calm, and inviolably equal. Amongst all the things which I have ob-

observed in the deceased Monsieur de Renty (saith a sufficient witness, who was intimately acquainted with him) his rare modesty, and great equality in his behaviour and deportment, gave me the first and most pregnant Ideas of his Sanctity. There was something in his looks, that carried so much reverence in it, that one might easily judge thereby, that he was always actually in the presence of God.

In every place, condition, employment whatsoever, the same in his looks, gesture, words and actions, whether alone or in company, with friends or strangers, rich or poor, before his children or servants, yea, even before his Lacquey, in field or town, at the table and every where.

We may freely avouch, that compleatly Master of himself he must be, that possesseth such an immutability: At which it is impossible for any to arrive, who applieth not himself continually to the presence of God, and hath not absolutely conquered his passions and interiour motions: For easie it is, amongst so many encounters, which daily presented themselves from without, to have our spirit discomposed, put out of frame, and be transported, and discover its irregularities by choler, word or gesture, or some other sign.

And such a constant equality is more admirable, when it is found in such a person as Monsieur de Renty, who was not Phlegmatick by Complexion, but Cholerick, hot, and of an active spirit; but the exact and perpetual care, force and watch, that he had over himself, held and preserved him in this Exterior deportment, so excellent, and divine, and so suitable to one that is to work good upon others.

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That which pleaseth me most in him (saith another very credible person in a Memorial) was the great recollection, and intimate union with God: attended with such a marvelous peace and tranquillity of mind, that it shined forth in his countenance, and begat a kind of devotion in the beholders. This union me thought, was ever in him, without any sign of distraction or levity, any word not necessary, no complacency in company, or any humane respects ever forced him to scatter his spirit, or to quit his union with God; not but that he was most full of civility, but so, as to look more within himself than without.

And indeed, this continual presence of God (saith the same person) did so take him up, that no accident, object, or any thing rare or extraordinary could divert him. I never saw him admire those things the world usually doth, nor fix his eyes upon any curiosities whatsoever. His gait in the streets was in a recollected, modest, and equal manner, without gazing here and there, that a man might see Jesus Christ was his way, his employment, his all, and nothing else.

Being one day importuned by a friend, out of curiosity to go see a great Personage, esteemed for a Saint, and to have the gifts of miracles. He replied with his wonted sweetness, Our Saviour is in all Churches in the B. Sacrament, and him we may visit.

And seeing the business of speech and silence, make up a great part in a good or bad conversation; let us see how this holy man, so zealous of his Neighbour's salvation, behaved himself in both.

He was very reserved in his speech, and that both from nature and grace, and indeed he could not have been so prudent a man, had he been a much speaker; since the Scripture makes it the proper character of prudence, to speak little; and, that in the multitude of words, there shall not want sin.

In the intercourse of visits, and all Assemblies of Devotion, where it concerned him to speak, he did in his course, with a mind and demeanour intent and recollected, with words short, but material. He was never seen forward or eager to speak, or in speaking, or to do it with a higher tone than ordinary, whatsoever was his haste, if he made any report, or gave account of business, he did it so briefly, and in words only necessary and pertinent, that a very hard matter, it would be (as one said of him) to find one that spoke better, and yet less than he.

Things that were vain or unprofitable, or the news of the times, were never the subject of his discourse; but always something good, and the Kingdom of God, in imitation of our Saviour; and where this discourse was diverted to worldly business or trifles, he either took leave of the company, or stole away, without saying any thing.

And when he talk'd even of good things, it was with moderation; saying, that there was much need of sparingness and sobriety, when we speak of God and good things; and that it was one of the greatest amusements that troubled him, when he was amongst spiritual persons, to hear them often spend precious time, in talking of virtue at large, and without fruit, departing from such Conferences

ferences with dry, empty, and dilapidated spirits: Whereas the secret of Christian vertue, consists not in speaking, but in doing, and that substantial word of God is only one, and this sufficiently efficacious, to produce the holy Spirit, and in its unity, to work marvellous things.

His conversation moreover, was in a true and high manner humble, respective; affable, officious, obliging, and cordial; Patient he was, in suffering the ignorances, rudenesses, imperfections, cross humors, and other faults of his neighbours; prudent in applying himself to their dispositions, and passing by many small matters, without seeming to take notice of them at all.

And so profitable and edifying was his demeanour, that wherever he came, his very looks and modesty, his words, his silence, and all his Exterior comportment, cast forth a fragrant and sweet perfume of Vertue, Devotion and Piety, and made a good impression upon the spirits of others. His very presence charmed many into recollection; the very sight of him was enough to bridle any, and his acquaintance have confessed, that their knowing that he was in the Church, hath wrought more attention in them at their prayers; and some of them, eight days after their having enjoyed his company, have felt in themselves the effects of grace, in an extraordinary attraction and devotion towards God.

Wheresoever he came, he was flock'd unto from all parts; out of that reverend esteem they had of him, and the desire of those consolations they were sensible of, in his presence. Notwithstanding, when he perceived any value set upon him,

self, or any applause of what he did or said, he was deeply humbled in spirit, testifying by his carriage the discontent of his soul, hanging down his head, casting down his eyes with deep silence, during such commendations, with a grave and set dememeanour, expressing his inward affliction, which begot respect and edification in the beholders.

For conclusion, I shall adde one thing very remarkable, and which shews how perfect and accomplished he was in his conversation, namely this, that his extraordinary way and fashion of converse, of dealing and treating with others, and of his devotion, was not check'd, blamed or condemn'd by any, but approv'd, priz'd and commended: so that generally all had him in esteem, reverence and love and said of him in proportion, as was said of his Master Christ, *He hath done all things well*. Such a general approbation as this, and in one that dealt in so many and difficult businesses, must needs be very rare, and argue a most prudent and advised spirit.

And as these things got approbation, so his humility, his honesty, his respect to each one, even the lowest, his affability, charity, patience, and other vertues, gained him the hearts of all; yet as it is a perilous thing to be so much esteemed, praised and approved by all, so God, by a wise and divine counterpois, to secure his vertue, and keep him from tripping in so slippery a way, did permit; that from whence he should have received the most esteem, approbation, and satisfaction, to wit, from the Lady his Mother, he found the quite contrary; and that in a way most strange and afflictive to him, as we have seen before.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

His conduct of his business.

IT is without contradiction, that few men in *Paris*, or in all *France*, were so much employed as he, in the affairs that concerned the service of God. For which he was furnished with great strength of body and mind, to manage so great and several businesses without difficulty, with great tranquillity, order, and content; husbanding his time to the best advantage, dispatching one speedily after another, and sometimes many together. He hath been seen to do three things together, without trouble or mistake. And at other times (when pressed with many dispatches at once) to read Letters, give Audience, and write Answers to different persons, all at the same time; of which he hath quitted himself handsomely and well.

In one of his Letters, he wrote thus:

‘It is very true, that business finds me out from all parts; insomuch that I am often inforced to read, write, and do business all at a time. A little assistance would do well, though I have many sharers; however, let not that trouble you, for I dispatch as much at present as I can, the rest in due time, without encumbering my self therewith. Our Saviour doth graciously bestow on me a peace of mind in all this, so that I am not at all distracted with it.’

His

His order was, seriously to consider of things, before any resolution; and if after his own sense given (to which he was not at all espoused) he found anothers reason to be better, he quitted his own. A thing very necessary to men of business yet rare to be found: since if we take not heed, we all idolize our own judgments, and falling in love with our private light, are desirous to be leading men, affecting to see our own opinions crowned.

Having composed rules for a Society of Pious persons, and digested them thorowly, he presented them to be examined by some vertuous persons, from whom he admitted with great humility, some corrections; cancelling hem with his own hand, requesting that they might be put in other terms, more proper than his own.

After he had resolved on any thing, he shewed himself prompt, firm, and constant for the execution; not quitting it, till he had brought it to the end it should be. Not like those, who hot at first, grow presently cold, and begin many things well, but finish nothing. Sometime when he had brought a thing into a fair way to perfection he committed it to a friend to finish; not out of any inconstancy of spirit, but to gain time for the undertaking and doing of more: And withal, that herein he might avoid the honour of it. Out of his great humility, passing that to another, which would exercise his humility, in letting another have the praise, which redounds more to him that happily ends a good thing, than to him that begins it.

In all affairs that concerned the service of God,

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he had an unmoveable constancy, and undaunted courage, never flagging or yielding up himself. And besides the force of his words, there appeared in his countenance an extraordinary assurance (although his ordinary deportment was always sweet and quiet) which particularly appeared in all meetings; where he manifested so much spirit, and God invested him with such a force, that those that beheld him, felt themselves struck with an awful respect. When he spake and gave his opinion, his proposals carried so much light in them, his judgment so much solidity, his reasons so great force (he taking every thing in its due place, and observing each juncture of time) that all were constrained to acquiesce in his determination.

But if any approved not of his advice, or disputed his reasons, he knew how to enforce them with such arguments, especially where he had any authority in the Assembly, that at length they yielded. But if they chanced to make another reply, he gave not one word more, but his very silence, and the steadiness of his countenance, and his other carriage, restrained any further dispute. And the meeting ended, he would go to that party, and crave his pardon with great humility: Sweetly informing him, that what he aimed at, was not to make good his own opinion, but for the cause of God, to which by duty he was obliged: But in other things, that he was most ready to yield to every one.

We meet daily with those spirits, that are very inconstant in business, doing and undoing every hour, very indecisive and mutable: But he

was of another temper, quick-sighted to penetrate into a business, judicious to determine it, and constant not to vary in a resolution well grounded; so that his word was his law, and was taken by others as current as an obligation.

When his presence was requested at any consult, he would be punctual at the time appointed, that none should stay for him: Where taking his place (and that the lowest, if it were possible) his demeanor was so modest and composed, that all were edified by it. Listening to others with great attention and seriousness, as if he had no other business. And after his opinion given, very brief and material: his presence being no further useful, he would take leave; being a great husband of his time, since other business for Gods service, still attended him elsewhere.

And notwithstanding the throng of business, and though never so important, he quitted not, for them, his Exercises of Piety, nor his care of perfection, which he preferred before all other his affairs; knowing, that as wholesome meat, taken immoderately, both hurt; and instead of strengthening the stomach, weakens, and suffocates its natural heat: So these Exterior employments, even the most holy, if a man surcharge himself, bring much prejudice, and extinguish the ardour of Devotion. Wherefore he was careful not to over-burthen himself with them, being very vigilant that they should not distract and dissipate him, nor quench the Interior motions of the Spirit, nor secularize his soul, but serve onely as means to elevate and unite him more to God.

In the multitude of business, he was still re-

collected, and as much alone in great meetings, as the Hermitics in the solitudes: which might be gathered from his modestie, and composed countenance, evidencing his application to his Interior, and his union to God, from whom he drew light and strength, for the managing and prudent ordering of these businesses. One day he wrote thus to his Director:

My recollection binders no business at all, but rather furthers it. For without it, I should have a solicitous desire of doing all my self; whereas I act now in a most serene way, in which I have no share; for it is our Lord that doth all.

In another Letter thus:

Finding my self one day much burthened with divers business, I had a desire to draw off my mind wholly, and at the same instant I found it. Since which time they create me no trouble, and I dispatch them more readily without thinking of them. This grace hath been often renewed to me (although in several manners) which I acknowledge to be very great because it preserves me disengaged, even in the multiplicity of business.

And notwithstanding he never omitted any thing of prudence or industry, for the effecting his businesses, yet the success he expected much more from Gods benediction, than from his industry, or any humane endeavours; knowing well, that what was undertaken for the service of God, and good of his Neighbour, was to be accomplished by his grace: Wherefore in every thing he had a great recourse to prayer, instantly commending all his exercises to God, and in all employments and choice of persons which he made use of, his eye was more upon grace than

abilities. And

And knowing that the affairs of God are not without their difficulties, but meet with great oppositions, even sometimes to be overturned, he was armed with patience in the undertaking, to suffer with courage, nor starting at the greatest dangers, but still hoping of the success. If they miscarried at any time, he rested well satisfied, after all fair means attempted on his part. Thus he writ to a friend:

*It is a great infirmity in our humane nature, that she seeks applause in matters of grace: Wherefore I look at it as a great favour from God, when I have the honour of instituting any enterprize, solidly undertaken, and well approved of, and acknowledged, to proceed from the Spirit of God, by those to whom he hath committed in his Church the judgement of such things; notwithstanding the accomplishment of it meets with many crosses and contradi-
ctions.*

In another thus:

We may take up good and holy designs, and God doth often inspire them; yet when he is pleased to permit a contrary event, we must adore his secret will which brings with it, more of mercy in the crossing of them, than if they had succeeded to our comfort. We should always be jealous over our own spirit, that it fix not upon any thing.

And again thus:

The sweet Jesus hath his designs, which he conducts by such means, as we would not at all make choice of; and the reason is, because he would thwart our wills, and abate our dependencies upon earth: And therefore often thwarts he our just undertakings, being more jealous of the Sacrifice of our hearts, than any thing else, how specious soever.

But the principal rule which this holy man observed in these affairs was, never to look at them in themselves, but in the will and design of God, and to proceed in view of this. Whence it came to pass, that he applied himself to business, not as appearing glorious, pleasant or profitable, but as agreeable to the will of God, to which he submitted his own, making poor and mean employments equally considerable, and sometime preferred before greater. Hence he took up things cast aside by others, undertook charities out of the road, and not taken notice of, applied himself to such Poor as were in a forlorn condition, believing, that herein was less of nature, and more of grace: And never thrust himself into a business without the will of God, and when it did consist with that, he was not hasty or precipitant, but let things go on kindly and sweetly, according to the pace of his Providence, and the course of his good pleasure.

The like we have of him, in Memorials from divers places: It was not his way, to begin or finish any thing, according to the motion of his own will, but of the Spirit of God, as far as he knew it. After he had undertaken any thing, he felt his inward motion to cease, he ceased also the pursuit. He had no private design or project whereby he steer'd (although he knew the things he had to do) but attended on the express order from above; which he received either by a light in his understanding, or by an impression in his will, or by some other way, that gave him as great a certitude, as any can have in the like occurrences. Whereupon a familiar friend, asked him one day, Whether he would do such a thing at such a time? He answered,

swered, *Know you not that to morrow is not mine.*

And at another time he said;

I see five or six things, which of necessity must be done; but I cannot tell you, which I would dispatch the first, nor when, nor how, for through the mercy of God I am indifferent to all things.

He writ thus to his Director:

I hope to be at Paris about the end of September, where I shall receive your orders to come to you, when I may be least troublesome: Where I shall be ready for what my Saviour shall appoint by you. I forecast nothing, but only to obey and follow his conduct by your appointment, and in every thing the best I can. I find by experience, that when I think to do most in any place, there I do nothing at all. This hath taught me to go divested of all design; and when I think least thereof, and abandon my self to God, then he doth the more; wherefore I will leave the doing to him, and to you in him.

Going one day in the holy Week, accompanied with a friend, to receive a most royal and liberal sum of money given by the Queen of France, in behalf of the Church of Canada; and passing by a Church where they were singing the Divine Service.

Let us, saith he, dispatch the will of God; it would be a great comfort to be present at the Church, to hear the praises of God; but let us pass on, since this is more in concurrence with his holy will.

The same party reported of him, that he had observed several persons wondring at his extraordinary recollection, and such an intimate union with God, in one man, who had so great employments, but he was above them all, affixed only to God, and to the execution of his will.

He gave this counsel to a certain friend, who had

great designs for the service of God, but such as at that time were not seasonable.

Let us not apply the days business, but to the day. Your intentions are pious, but you must resign the future to God, and be willing for the present, to live and follow what he makes appear to be his will, and to keep your self still before him as a ready Sacrifice, together with our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the conclusion of this Chapter, I shall produce a Letter to his Director, upon the same subject, in the year 1648. full of light.

'I will tell you, said he, what passed yesterday within me, by which you may understand my present condition: Hearing the Gospel of the Assumption of our Lady, which speaketh of *Martha* and *Mary*, most of the sentiments I formerly had upon that subject came presently into my mind; to wit, that prayer and converse with God, are much to be preferred before all Exterior exercises, though never so holy; seeing that *Martha* busied about so holy and excellent a service, was reprehended for her trouble, and *Mary* commended for her repose. This word, *Turbaris erga plurima, Thou art troubled about many things*, hath besteaded me a long time, to draw me off from outward things, and also from inward, though good, if not absolutely necessary, as visiting and instructing the poor, or reading or writing something of devotion, and the like. And I understood it expedient at that time to quit them, the better to betake my self to Internal operations, and arrive at the laying down of our own will and vivacity, to attend wholly to the Divine appointment, following it in prudent simplicity, by the Spi-

of Christ, which enlivens and lives in those that hearken to it with respect.

But you must know, that for these three or four months which I have spent in *Low-Normandy*, I have been, as it were, continually employed in Exterior works; as conferring with all sorts of people, taking care of the sick that found me out, removing from place to place, reconciling differences, new building a great Church, which was to be pluck'd down and enlarged. For which I was forced to draw out several platforms, and make the very models (in which formerly I have had some insight) by reason of the want of Architects in that place, calling to mind my old notions, and busying my self wholly in it. Yesterday, after my morning work, hearing the same Gospel read, and these words in particular, *Turbaris erga plurima, Thou art troubled about many things*; a certain Interior light came upon me, and it was said unto me, *Non turbaris erga plurima, Thou art not troubled about many things*; giving me to understand, and that in a very evident manner, that the things we are employed upon according to the Divine order, whatsoever they be, do not create us any such trouble, and I discovered clearly (at least as I thought) that *Mary* was not reproved for doing a good work, but for doing it too solicitously. Our Saviour intimating to her by these words, *Turbaris erga plurima*, that her business was done in trouble and inordinate agitation of spirit, though the end was very laudable. That the principal business consists in hearing the Eternal Word, even as his own humanity, whether in working or preaching, or any other employment, received its motions from the
 'Divi-

Divinity. *A me ipso facio nihil, sicut audio, hæc loquor,*

I do nothing of my self, as I hear, that I speak, said he.

In like manner ought we to take our directions

from Jesus Christ, who is the Word of Eternal

Life, and act nothing with disturbance, but all in

peace by his Spirit.

I received hereby a great support, in the perfor-

mance of these petty Exterior offices, to which my

duty obliged me, and made no difficulty at all, to

yield up my self, to this holily-disordered Divine

Order. In which I perceived, that it was Gods

will I should perform these petty things, which could

not be done without me. For these three months

I have not, it may be, spent three or four

hours at my prayers upon my knees together, out

of the Church; and should I perform them at all,

no otherwise than on this fashion, I should but very

ill discharge my duty.

It is certain, that I have discharged it ill enough,

yet I understand that God is pleased in the midst of

these employments, to which he has appointed me,

to make me sensible of his presence and power, in uni-

ting my soul to himself by certain ways, and that the

outward work may be performed by the hand, whilst

the soul solaceth herself in that real alliance of Sons

with their Father, by the Spirit of the Son, who

admitteth us into his communion; together with

that of the blessed Virgin, the Angels and Saints;

yea, and of the whole Heaven, if you will. Such

a wonderful expansion of soul can our Lord give;

when, and how he pleaseth.

I enjoyed at the same time, such a sensible im-

pression of God, yet excelling all sense (as being

acted in the more noble part of the Soul; viz. the

Spirit)

Spirit) that if I had been thrown like a bowl, I could never have lost the sight of my God. All things are here transitory, for our Lord turns this Bowl in a strange manner, when it pleaseth him. And these diverse turnings are done for the souls advantage, whereby she is fashioned for every occasion, that she may do nothing for or by herself, but all for God, and according to him.

Moreover, I evidently see, that a person whom God employeth in these low affairs, if he follow them with the same fidelity, as if they were greater, keeping his station, by obedience and self denial, is as acceptable to him, as he that is occupied in the noblest functions: The work it self making not the difference, but the faithful execution of it, by submitting to his good pleasure. Will nothing please you but to convert a thousand worlds, and bring all souls to God? you shall be content to carry stones, and sometimes to sit still and do nothing. The Sacrifice of Patience is both well pleasing to God, and comfortable to our selves. And I believe it is without comparison more rare, to find a soul faithful in patience, and content to do no more than God would have him than faithful in actions which appear abroad.

I know well, that God doth in all, but this Sacrifice of Patience, and of Cessation, is more commendable in a heart, who hath the love and zeal of his honour, and in pursuit hereof, is hurried on to action, and hath need of greater force to withhold it from doing, than to incite it. This kind of Cessation seems to be nothing at all available for the nourishment of such zeal, and this hunger and thirst after righteousness, which would devour the
four

four quarters of the world, is reverberated like the fire pent in, which circles and works about, until it find a vent by this consideration, that God is all-sufficient in himself, and hath no need of us for advancing of his glory; that we receive more honour from our employments than he service, being so impure, that we blemish every thing we meddle with, and rob it of some lustre, and prove often not only unprofitable, but endamaging servants. I have one word more to tell you, that you may direct me in it, which is, that I am really ashamed and confounded in my self, that I do no more for God; considering his dignity, his love, his gifts and communications, by the alliance of Jesus Christ and his Spirit: Which indeed, together with the sense of my great imbecility for any thing that is good, of my sins and miseries, would work my extream torment, did I not be thankful my self of his all-sufficiency in himself, and that he doth with us as he pleaseth, in keeping us in obedience and profound annihilation.

Thus far his Letter, wherein are many good things to be learnt.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

*The excellent use he made of all things,
and his application to the Infancy of our
Lord for that purpose.*

IT must needs be, that Monsieur Renty made excellent use of all accidents that occur'd to him, and generally of all creatures, to attain to such a height of perfection; whereof this usage of them (as much as is in man) is undoubtedly the principal means, to which all others are subordinate, otherwise, and without it, unprofitable and meer hinderances.

True it is, that God hath placed in the bosom of each thing, as in riches, poverty, honours, disgrace, health, sickness, good and evil, a secret virtue and moral capacity to advantage us in our salvation, and to be instruments of perfection even as so many cords to draw and unite us to himself: but all this, according to our usage of them. For being well used, they produce good effects; but contrarily, abused instead of uniting us to God, they estrange us further from him rendring us more imperfect and vicious, and instead of advantages, prove the instruments of our ruine. Wherefore he being well instructed in this grand secret of Spiritual life, employed all his care to practise it perfectly. Which that we may better understand,

stand, it will not be amiss, to follow it to the Spring-head. The holy man had continually in his heart, making it the principal conduct of his devotions (as we have mentioned, and may be easily deduced from the series of this History) to unite himself to our Lord Jesus Christ) and that upon good grounds; Since out of him (as saith *S. Peter*) there is no salvation; God having chosen him, the sole Mediator of Redemption, and the repair of our miseries; loving no creature in the world but him, with a love of perfect amity: Whereupon; by *S. Paul*, he is styled the Son of his love and good pleasure; and we alone are accepted in and through him; who are found beautiful and shining with glory; when we are united to him; and out of him we appear deformed, hideous, and most abominable; being indeed, without him, filled with sin, and his enemies. Wherefore every man is so far dear and amiable to him, as he stands united to his Son, which is manifested in the Blessed Virgin and his Apostles; all our actions pleasing him, so far as they are united to him, even as each member of our body participates of life, according as it is animated by our soul.

Having therefore perfectly learn'd this fundamental truth of Christianity, his study was, to unite himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to copy him forth as his Rule and Law for the regulating of his Exterior and Interior; adoring him daily under this notion, applying himself with great reflection to his words, actions, designs, and the several mysteries, receiving from each of them great enlightnings. Thus he writ to me one day upon the mystery of his Incarnation:

'I have had the grace divers times, very intimately to understand that ineffable mystérie, hidden with God from all ages, and manifested now to the Saints (according to *S. Paul*) which is the alliance he hath contracted with us, in Jesus Christ. This knowledge produceth in me as much astonishment as love. And (to tell you my sense of it) a man possessed with these verities, remains no more a man, but becomes annihilated, and all his desire is to be lost and melted, on purpose to change his nature, and enter into this Spirit of Jesus. to act no less in him than by him.

'I have conceived such great things of our Saviours Humanity, united to the Divinity, as cannot be uttered. How hath this alliance of the Divinity, most deeply abated the sacred Humanity into a self-annihilation, and a sacrifice of love, upon the sight of the greatness of God? What an honour is this to the Humane Nature, to be thus predestinated? and, What a glory to us to be chosen and called to an entrance into his favour, and a rising to God, and the everlasting enjoyment thereof through him? It would spend me this whole day to write to you, the view that I have had of the wisdom and bounty of God, touching this mystérie of Love, which he hath opened unto us in his Son.

And though he was truly devoted to all the mysteries of our Lord, yet in a most special manner to that of his Infancy: The occasion whereof was thus;

Being constrained to make a journey to *Dijon*, by reason of a suit of Law before-mentioned, he
heard

heard much talk of Sister *Margaret* of the blessed Sacrament, a Religious *Carmelite* of the Covent of *Beaulne*, on whom our Saviour had conferred particular favours, who led a life very extraordinary, grounded upon true and solid vertue. And as our Lord hath several ways to sanctifie a soul, and fit it for h's sacred purposes; so he was pleased to exercise this choice woman absolutely in the mysterie of our Saviours Infancy, and through that pipe, to convey into her soul, a torrent of grace and extraordinary gifts, not onely for herself but others; as may be seen in her life, now in writing, by a person most worthy of such a work. Monsieur *Remy* had a desire to go to *Beaulne*, being but seven leagues from *Dijon*, to recommend himself to the prayers of this holy Virgin: And though when he came thither, he neither spake to her, nor saw her (she having, by a particular conduct of our Saviour, been retired for thirteen years from the speech of any secular person) yet notwithstanding, he received much benefit from his journey; as he expressed in a Letter writ back from *Dijon*, to the Prioress of that place.

I want words to express the mercies I received by my journey to Beaulne. Sister Margaret hath marked me out, in the hol Infant Jesus, such a divesting of my self, of all worldly things, that it appears to me my rendezvous, where I must strip my self naked of all things else.

The year after, he made a second journey, where God having altered her resolution, for speech and converse with others, he had the happiness to discourse with her, and contracted at that time, a very intimate alliance of grace, receiving great gifts by means thereof. The chiefest and

source

source of all the rest, being that our Saviour engaged him, as he had done her, in a more particular devotion to the mystrie of his Infancy, and imprinted in him the likenesses of the like Graces and Spirit.

This holy man (whose judgment may be highly esteemed by us, considering his extraordinary insight into spiritual matters) greatly valued this Religious woman, approving exceedingly her directions, and testifying how great a blessing he reckoned her acquaintance, and what benefit he had reaped from her, even after her death. To which purpose he writ thus to me the eighteenth of June. 1648. the year of her death.

The holy Infant, sweet Jesus, hath taken to himself our good Sister Margaret, whose death was consonant to the dispositions of her life, and miraculous graces. I have received from her, since her death great comfort: That grace I received, according to my present estate and weakness, to enter into the Infancy of our Saviour, hath since been renewed to me, and I have understood it more solidly.

About a month after, I received these lines from him.

I had yesterday, by the singular bounty of God, a view of his Divine Majestie, of S. John Baptist, and Sister Margaret of the B. Sacrament, so clearly represented to me in my spirit, that I cannot suspect the truth of it. O what effects were produced by their presence, and what love by these sights! I am wholly renewed in my respects, to that great Saint my Patron, and to that glorious servant of God, who honoured him very much, whilst she was living; and from whom, without doubt, since her death, he hath beg'd to be my Protector. It is most certain, that

the work of God in her, was one continued prodigy of grace, and a master-piece of his hand.

But let us return to his application made to the Infancy of our Saviour, chiefly begun in his second journey to *Beaulm*. Of which we may understand something from this Letter, written to a Father of the Oratory, Confessor to the Carmelites there.

I must needs tell you, that upon my first journey which I made to you above a year ago, I brought back with me, a great esteem and devotion to the Infancy of our Saviour, but I was not yet well settled in it. I attempted it from time to time, but could not yet make in my principal food. Since which the holy Infant, by a supernatural grace, hath manifested and opened himself to me, and now I find every thing in him, and am remitted thither for all.

And to the Priorsess he writ thus :

I must acquaint you, that the holy Infant Jesus, will grant me the favour to apply my self particularly to his honour, to give my self to him, and to his holy dispositions ; ordering my life, and the sacrifice of my self, by the conduct of his Spirit.

In order hereunto, he consecrated, and gave up himself thereto, in these terms ; a copy whereof, written with his own hand, and in his own blood, he sent to Sister *Margaret*, which is kept with great devotion in that Convent. And another, something more enlarged to his Ghostly Father, to which he wrote his name only in Blood, in these words :

To the Honour of my King, the Holy Infant Jesus.

I Have consecrated my self this *Christmas-Day*; 1643. to the holy Infant Jesus, offering up to him my whole Being, my Soul, my Body, my Free-will, my Wife, my Children, my Family, the Estate which he hath given me, and finally, all that I am concerned in; having beseeched him to enter into full Possession, Property, Jurisdiction, of all that I am. That I may live no more, but in and to him, in the quality of a Victim, separate from every thing of this world, and challenging no more share thereof, than according to the applications which he shall give, and shall allow me. Inasmuch, that from henceforward, I shall look at my self merely as an instrument in the hand of the holy Infant Jesus, to do whatever pleaseth him, in great Innocency, Purity, and Simplicity, without reflection or return upon any thing whatsoever, without taking share in any work; without having joy or grief from any thing that arrives, not looking upon things in themselves, but in his will and conduct, which we will endeavour to follow by the appearance and presence which we shall render his Gratch, and to the Divine States of his Infancy. I therefore this day lose my own being, to become wholly a slave, subsisting upon the holy Infant Jesus, to the glory of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost.

This I signed, into the hands of the most blessed Virgin my Mother, my Patroness, and my Protectress, and in the presence of S. Joseph.

Gaston Jean Baptist.

Q2

And

And as he did with an intire heart, consecrate himself to this holy Infant, so did this, bestow himself freely on him; revealing it particularly to Sister Margaret of the B. Sacrament, that he should from thenceforward be guided and animated by the Spirit of Infancy; and that he was descending to him, to be his Master, his Light, and his Intelligence: And shewing her one day his heart, he said, See here the habitation of my Servant.

Upon which she wrote to Monsieur Remy, how the Infant Jesus had bestowed himself upon him, to be a Spiritual and Celestial Air, for him to breath constantly; even as his body breathed this Material Air, and that his Innocence, Purity, and Simplicity should subsist in him instead of himself; destroying in him what his nature had corrupt and polluted.

And herein he made so large a progress, that she often saw him within a beam of light, so penetrated and filled with the grace of this holy Infancy, like a sponge in the Ocean, even absorpt in that abyss of infinite riches, beyond his expression. And he himself writ concerning it to a person in these words:

The Divine King of the Cratch, the holy Infant Jesus, doth so accumulate his favours upon me, that I beseech you to thank him: They are inexpleable.

From this time his custom was every Eve of the 25 day of each Month, to enter into his Chappel at ten a Clock at night, and there to remain in prayer till midnight. He adored the precious moment of our Saviours birth and entrance into the world, performing certain acts of Devotion before the Image of his Sacred

Sacred Infancy; which further he honoured, by inviting a poor child to dinner, entertaining him with wonderful great respect. And during all that time that he celebrated the voyage of the Infant Jesus into Egypt, and return to Nazareth, he had to dinner every day three poor folks, for the honour of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, during which time he would never ride in a Coach, though his business often called him to painful and troublesome journeys afar off on foot, and at length he quite gave over the use of a Coach.

After he had engaged himself in this devout application to the Infancy of our Lord; and being filled with his grace, and animated by his Spirit, had received thereby wonderful impressions and illuminations. His Ghostly Father desired of him to write down his conceptions of that Divine Mystery, and wherein chiefly that grace consisted; which begat this ensuing Letter, in the year 1645.

You have laid your commands upon me, to set down in writing, wherein consists the grace of the Infancy of our Saviour, so far as I understand it. This Adorable Lord hath renewed in me this morning two Conceptions, which he had given me a month since, three days one after another, by which I shall be able to express what I conceive of it.

Being at my prayers in the Church about a month ago, I fell into some inward inquietude about my Devotion to this Infancy, by reason that my Spirit was possessed with this thought, That a Christian should regard our Saviour intirely, from his Incarnation to his Glory, where he sits at the right hand of his Father, and from whence he sends us his Spirit. And that we should make our addresses to all these mysteries, according to our necessities; and therefore to tie our selves to one particular, were to send up maimed Devotions, and to limit

the extent of Verity and Grace. After this, I went to receive the B. Sacrament, abandoning my self wholly to my God, according to my usual custom. A little while after the Communion, I saw (by an enlightning) our Saviour entire; that is, all his mysteries, from his Incarnation, to his estate of Glory, where he resides at present, governing us. And in particular, the Greatness and Dignity of this mysterie of his Infancy; and withal, I was instructed, that this mysterie is our Port, and our Address, for to obtain our Consummation in glory: That this is it, to which we must direct our selves, and here stay our thoughts, and that it would be temerity, to proceed to other mysteries on the same manner. I saw it rashness to desire and demand crosses for our selves, since it is the work of God's grace to conduct us to them, and uphold us under them: I saw it rashness; to desire Mount Thabor; that is, high illuminations. Finally, that we ought not presently to address our selves to those other mysteries of our Saviour, but only to this of the Infancy, which brings us into the ignorance, the separation from, and in application of things of this life, making no further use of them, than as they are given us for necessity, which keeps us in great silence, and produceth a Mortification of the Exterior man, whilst the Interior is busied in contemplating the most holy Soul of our Saviour, continually employing it self in looking up toward his Father, in his Love, in zeal of his Glory, in the Offering of himself, and in the obedience to proceed forward, in all innocence, and purity, and simplicity, to all his other estates, through which his Father had appointed him to pass.

I found then, that for the happy conducting of our selves through all conditions, whether of light or darkness, of Thabor or Calvary, we must, for to receive and improve grace, begin at the Infancy, which teacheth us our first

first lesson of Abnegation, to be taught of God, of silence and innocence, without any regard or pretensions to our selves; but with the same spirit of submission and obedience, that this blessed Babe Christ Jesus there practised, and taught us:

This light and knowledge hath established me more than formerly in this mystérie, finding there my bottom, abiding there with attention and reverence, to do what shall be commanded me afterward. For the soul doth not raise it self by it self to any thing; but on the contrary, doth empty her self, resting still in her own littleness, with great recognition of what passeth, and with the simplicity of a pure resigned aspect. O Father, how guilty shall I appear before God, in answering so little to the greatness of his gifts! It is my grief, and a great one, as he well knoweth.

Some three days after, these words of S. Paul, were unexpectedly suggested unto me, *Hoc sentire in vobis, quod & in Jesu Christo, &c.* Let the same mind be in you as was in Jesus Christ: But chiefly was I affected with these words, *Semetiptum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens; He emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant; and those that follow, Factus obediens usque ad mortem; Being made obedient, even to death. And light was given me to understand, how that these words carry with them, the proof of that which I had contemplated three days before, of the Right way and proceeding of this my Saviour, who in his Infancy humbled himself, even to the form of a servant, and all the rest of his life, to death, being obedient to the Cross, following the decrees of his Father, not by election, but by submission and patience. This second view confirmed me further, and after another manner in this mystérie.*

The Infancy therefore of our Saviour, is an estate, where we must dye to all things; and where the soul, in Faith, Silence, Reverence, Innocence, Purity and Simplicity, doth attend and receive the orders of God, making it his daily work in Abnegation; neither looking before nor behind, but being united to the holy Child Jesus: Who with an absolute Resignation, received orders from his Father, for his visitation by the Shepherds and Wisemen, for his Circumcision, going up to Jerusalem, flying into Egypt, his return back, his journey to Jordan to be Baptized, into the Wilderness to be Tempted, for his Preaching; and finally, his Death upon the the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and Consummation in Glory. Thus, Father, ought we, methinks, to follow Jesus, our Model in these steps, through the grace of this Infancy.

This is it he wrote to his Director, concerning this Mystery, and why he chose it before others; and which appears also in a Letter to another.

‘For this reason, ought we to address our selves to the Infancy, rather than the Cross, or any other Myserie, because he emptied himself (as saith the Apostle) of his own good pleasure, and chose the Manger, but not the Cross, to which he was conducted by his obedience. To teach us, to chuse, of our selves, Annihilation; and after, to suffer our selves willingly, as little children, to be led into Egypt, the Desert, the Cross, and the Crown.

Besides these solid enlightnings, relating to this Mystery, he had moreover others touching the three Vertues of Purity, Innocence, and Simplicity; in which chiefly consists the spirit of this Mystery, and which it produceth in a soul that is united unto it. Thus he expressed himself concerning them:

I have beheld my soul upon the Bulwark of Innocence, and upon the Foundation of Death, Annihilation, and Nakedness, as I live in Divine Purity, with the holy Infant Jesus.

But because this is somewhat obscure, he writ thus more clearly to his Director:

I have viewed my soul upon its situation of Death, Annihilation and Nakedness; that is to say, purged and stripped out of its self, and of every creature: For when the soul is suspended, as in a desert, from beholding any thing at all, and without any prop to rest upon, God draweth her straightway to himself, by the cords of pure love, which he letteth down from heaven (as saith S. Catherine of Genoa) and this cord is no other than the Infant Jesus; in union of whom we ought to render unto God, all the rights of a perfect Sacrifice, which in Purity, Innocence, and Simplicity, is sacrificed and consumed for his glory. It hath often been declared to me, and this is my very basis (as far as my infidelity may permit me to say it) that I ought to act no further, save by the conduct of the Infant Jesus, having still before me his sacred actions, his unspotted love to his Father, his sacrificing himself for his Glory, and the destruction of sin: his submission to all his Decrees, which he understood distinctly, waited upon with patience, and executed in their several seasons: In the Manger, in his flight into Egypt, in his thirty years Concealment, in his travel till his death; acting nothing by his own, but according to the perfect will of his Father. Whereby I am taught my duty, to work in the simplicity of spirit: For the conservation of which, Innocence and Simplicity are communicated unto me, like two Bulwarks to uphold me therein.

Innocence is one Bulwark of this Purity; or if you please, a bright Crystal, through which I behold all things without offence; that is to say, without receiving infection from them,

so that the vices and disorders of men do not fix or make any impression upon me. This Innocence carries me forth to my neighbour with exceeding great benignity and sweetness, and is an incredible relief and succour to me in all employments, by reason of the multitude of mischiefs and sins I daily meet with; it being my Saviours pleasure I should fly to this for remedy against them. Innocence therefore applies it self to what is before me in all my actions, to the end that Purity should receive no trouble in its operation; that is to say, in the respect it hath towards God.

Simplicity is the other Bulwark and Guard of Purity, and hath its influence chiefly upon what is past and done, separating my soul from all duplicity, and multiplicity, and reflections upon what hath been done or seen. Thus is my soul happily inclosed betwixt two Bulwarks, and two Walls; whereof the one, viz. Innocence, preserveth her against the present and the future; the other, of Simplicity, from what is past and behind her.

Happy are those souls that are called to this mystery, and to be acquainted with, and enjoy God, made man, in the Manger: From which, no doubt, they receive great blessings, in the penetration and possession of the Purity, Innocence, and Simplicity of this Divine Babe; in the same manner as men find it more easie to obtain favours on the Birth-day, or Coronation of a great Prince, than at other times.

Thus this man of God, and Infant of Grace, declared his sense touching these three Vertues, and such the noble and divine uses which he made of them: Purity having influence on his intentions, ruling in all his Interiour and Exteriour actions, so that thereby he singly aimed at the glory and interest of God: Just as an infant worketh simply, according to nature, in looking, crying, hearing, eating and sleeping; performing all these purely, according to nature

tures principles, both for the efficient and final cause of each of them. In like manner doth the child of Grace produce all his actions by the iustinct of Grace, and hath it for his ultimate end, purely aiming at Gods glory, in imitation of Christ Jesus, who behaved himself in the same manner in the Manger, towards God his Father; even as a sucking child by innocence he looketh upon every object with a pure and innocent eye, not engaged upon any thing, but abstracted and free from all malice, all impressions of their Species or Idea's; much more from all pollution from them; like as the Sun shineth upon a dunghil, without taint or imperfection.

Simplicity quitted him from all multiplicity, engagements, reflections upon his own Interest, Complacencies, Vanity, passion of Joy or Sadness; from any of his own Performances or Speeches, from Praise or Dispraise, or from the Vices of the Times, Places, or Persons he conversed with, to receive any pollution from them; no otherwise than a new-born child beholdeth a Pageantry which passeth before it, which is forgotten as soon as removed.

Lastly, Purity directed his eye in a straight line to God, pretending to nothing but his glory, in any thing that man had a hand in.

And this proceeding of his all ought to imitate, if they desire to make progress in Vertue, and arrive to perfection; and particularly, those that treat much with their neighbour in the negotiation of his salvation, that they may do it with more advantage to him, and with no damage to themselves.

PART IV.

His Vertues, whereby he was elevated and united to God.

CHAP. I.

His Interiors, and his application to the Sacred Trinity.

ALthough we have hitherto said of the Heroick Vertues, and famous Actions of Monsieur *Reinty*, which had respect either to his own perfection, or the good of his neighbour, is very remarkable: Yet the principal and more admirable, is that which remains, viz. The state of his Interiour, and his communication with God.

So *David* saith, that the Kings daughter is all glorious within; and the Holy Ghost setteth forth in lofty expressions, the Spouse in the *Canticles*, for the beauty of her face, and of her whole body; But it adds, that nothing could sufficiently be uttered concerning the hidden graces of her Soul, and Interiour, which

which were far more charming and attractive; even as the chief excellencies of our B. Saviour consisted not in his Exterior, or in those things he did either for himself, or for men; but in the intimate union he had with God, and those actions he produced in the profundity of his Spirit towards him: In like manner, ~~our~~ perfection consists not in our good works, which appear outwardly, nor in the exercises of Charity, Humility, Poverty, and the like Vertues open to the eye, but in the application of our spirit to God, and our union with him by the acts of Virtue, and chiefly of the three Theological ones. It consisteth, I say, in honouring and adoring him in the Temple of our souls; in performing to him there the Sacrifices of a lively Faith upon the Altar of our Understanding; in offering up the Holocausts of perfect Hope, and ardent Charity, upon the Altar of our Will; and in a total subjection of our spirits to his, and an union of all our faculties with him; whereby we become purified, sanctified, and deified, proportionably as the blessed Saints are in heaven, where this perfection is completed.

This was Monsieur Remy's practice, whereby he had a true feeling of S. Paul's words, *Your life is hid with God, through Jesus Christ*; concerning which he expressed his thoughts thus to a friend:

There is nothing in this world so separate from the world, as God; and the greater the Saints are, the greater is their retirement into him: This our Saviour taught us whilst he lived on earth, being in all his visible employments united to God, and retired into the bosom of his Father.

His principal care was incessantly to cultivate and adorn his soul, to unite it intimately to God by the

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operations of his understanding and will; to give up himself, with all his strength, to this hidden and divine life of Faith, Hope and Charity, of Religion, of a mystical Death, and entire Abnegation of himself.

Some years before his death, his particular attractive was the contemplation of the B. Trinity, being the last end in which all must terminate: Whereof he gave this account to his Spiritual Guide, in the year 1645.

I carry about with me ordinarily an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the Holy Trinity.

And in another Letter thus;

All things vanish out of my fancy, as soon as they appear, nothing is permanent in me but God, through a naked faith, which causeth me to resign my self up to my Saviour, affordeth me strength and confidence in God the Trinity; in that the operation of the three Divine persons is manifested to me in a distinct manner; viz. The love of the Father, which reconciles us by his Son; the Father and the Son who give us life through the Holy Spirit; the H. Spirit which causeth us to live in Communion with Jesus Christ; which worketh in us a marvelous alliance with the Sacred Trinity, and produceth often in our hearts by faith, such inward feelings, as cannot be expressed.

He writ also to a confident friend, and one that was much devoted to this Sacred Mystery;

How that the proper and special effect of Christian grace is to make us know God in the Trinity, uniting us to her Son, who causeth us to work by his Spirit. And to say the truth, we are consecrated by our Baptism to the worship of the B. Trinity: Therein we are consecrated to his Glory, receive its Seal, and put on its Badge and Livery; to manifest to us, and to all the world, that we are perfectly and absolutely its own.

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He writ to the same party in the year 1648. on the same subject.

The Feast of the blessed Trinity giveth me this occasion to write, that we may renew our selves in the honour and dependance we have upon this incomparable Mystery: I desire to pyrr hearts with you, to adore that which we are not able to express: Let us melt into an acknowledgement thereof, and fortifie our selves by the grace of Faith, through Christ, to be perfected in this adorable Mystery. Infinite things might be spoken, which my heart resenteth, of the Latitude of this grace, but I cannot utter them: I beseech you let us adore God, let us adore Jesus Christ, let us adore the holy Spirit, which Spirit discovereth unto us the operations of love and mercy of these Divine Persons in us, and let us make good use thereof.

The same year he clearly expressed his condition and the manner of wholly applying himself to the Sacred Trinity; how that his soul was most entirely united to the three Divine Persons; from whence he received illuminations, and surpassed all humane understanding; how he lived perpetually retired, and locked up, as it were, with the Son of God, in the bosom of his Father: Where this Son became his Light, his Life, and Love, and the holy Spirit his Guide, his Sanctification and Perfection; how he did bear within himself the Kingdom of God (which he explained by a resemblance of what the Blessed enjoy in heaven) by vertue of that view and transcendant knowledge of the sacred Trinity, which was communicated to him; and that pure Love by which he felt his heart inflamed, and, as it were, transformed into God, in whom he possessed a joy and repose beyond all expression: That in this estate he had a conformity with the Son of God, by a participation and fellow-

fellowship both in his Beautitude and Sufferings which he endured here below, and that by his holy Spirit were accomplished in him, the mysteries of the whole Pilgrimage of our Saviour in this world; rendring him as a daily sacrifice to the B. Trinity, breathing after the Resurrection, and his perfect Consummation in Glory. Such was the disposition of this holy man towards the B. Trinity, in which he passed his latter years, and in which he dyed, finishing his sacrifice; and was often wont to say, That when a man is call'd up hither, he must abide there without any changing.

Being guided this way, and treading these paths, he made an admirable progress to the highest pitch of perfection attainable in this life, each Person in the sacred Trinity working in his soul wonderful impressions of grace, sealing him with their particular characters, and sanctifying him in an extraordinary manner.

The Father kept him alway retired and recollected in his own bosom; where he bestowed upon him a large share of his own infinite inclination to communicate himself to others, and of this blessed Celestial Fecundity, in begetting children, not of flesh and blood, but of the Spirit; enflaming his heart with a paternal and maternal love towards mankind, from whence did flow that unparaell'd charity whereof we have spoken.

The Son transformed him into a lively image of God, through the resemblance of his own perfections: bestowing on him a filial spirit, to acquit himself towards him in all his endeavours, with that singular reverence, faith, confidence, love and obedience, as is required from a Son to a Father; bring-
R. ing

ing him into such a condition, as that God spake to him Interiourly, producing in him his word, accompanied with such power and strength, as was able to touch mens souls, and work in them the blessed fruits of salvation.

The Holy Ghost (that infinite pure and reciprocal love of the Father to the Son, and of the Son to the Father) cleansed him from all the impurities of self-love, and self-seeking; enflamed him with a perfect love towards God, taught him the way of spiritualizing all material things, of sanctifying all indifferent things, of extracting good out of all evil; and finally, of leading a life truly spiritual, after the grand pattern of our Saviour. This he expressed in brief, in a Letter to his Director, writ in the year 1647.

‘The Divine goodness worketh in me, that which
‘I am not able to express: I possess even the B. Tri-
‘nity, and find distinctly in my self the operations of
‘the three Divine Persons.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

His Faith.

THE better to take this Spiritual Life in pieces, we will begin with his Faith, the prime Theological Vertue; which *Gulielmus Parisiensis* calls the *Primum Vivens* of the soul; and *S. Paul*, the first step we make in our advance towards God.

This blessed man studied with particular care a solid foundation in this vertue, knowing the incredible consequence thereof for a spiritual life, and how all other vertues depend on it, as on their Root, their Rule, and Measure.

‘O how good a thing (saith he, in one of his Letters) ‘is it to live of Faith! I seem to understand ‘this Vertue every day better and better: Those that ‘are established in this, the life by which the just ‘live (according to *S. Paul*) are at length compleated ‘to Perfection, and enjoy here the first fruits of ‘glory.

He possessed this grace in so high a degree, that he was more ascertained of the presence of God, of the verity of the mysteries of our Faith, than of the shining of the Sun. He truly lived by Faith, this was the path in which he walked, working all by the spirit thereof: Hereby he looked upon things not only with his corporal eyes, but with those that pierced deeper, considering them, not according to their present or past condition, or the order of na-

ture; but their future and eternal, according to their relation to grace and glory; regarding nothing, but as it was, or might be a means of his own or others salvation. All his works were performed by the hand of Faith, which prove strong and effectual; which more willingly handles Ulcers, and loathsome soars of poor people, than gallants do Satins or Velvets.

‘The pure and vigorous Faith of the primitive Christians (*said he*) caused them to act without those conveniences and necessities which we stand upon (which indeed argue the decay and weakness of Faith) such heroick actions, as we onely now admire; these assuredly lived by Faith, without any form and composition of their own proper spirit in great Simplicity, Efficacy and Verity.

Being fortified by this Faith, he was wont to say, that he felt no difficulty at all, when our Saviour sensibly deserted him for a time, and sent him great aridities; attributing all those inquietudes, impatience, and anxieties, which we labour under, in this estate of privation, to the want of this grace. I have taken out of one of his Letters, what he writ to this purpose.

‘We seldom meet with persons addicted to prayer, that can behave themselves prudently under Interior derelictions; or that can have patience to wait for some time at the door of sensible consolations and enlightnings, without making a forcible entry; that do not chafe themselves, and cast this way and that way, and seek by their own means to procure them; seeking for another support than that of Faith, which alone

alone should suffice any spiritual man: These sensible gusts are but sent as supplements of the littleness, and cordials for the faintings of faith: But the just should live by faith, and upon that foundation rest himself in expectation of our Saviour with patience: Our inconveniences arise from hence, that we are a people of little faith, to discern things by its light, although we often pretend to know more than really we do.

To another he writ concerning this point (upon the subject of the Centurions faith) thus:

Where shall we meet with a Faith comparable to that of the Centurion? Alas, what a shame is this to our Spiritual persons, who talk much of Faith, but indeed have little more than the sound, scarce any thing of the truth and effect thereof: how few are there that can bear the afflictions of spirit or body, with a naked Faith, and such a simplicity as seeketh remedy only from God, and maketh use of patience, when comfort doth not appear so soon as expected: We all covet to enjoy Jesus Christ sensibly, and that he would come to our houses, to cure our anxieties: And for want of these sensible comforts, the Spirit runs and wanders on all hands, seeking repose, but findes it not, because indeed it is not to be found in her action, but only in her sacrifice made in Faith, which brings down the Spirit of Christ, which is our strength and life, in the midst of troubles, and of death. The Centurion was ashamed and confounded that Christ would come to his house, his Faith mounting far above these sensible signs: Whereupon he is honoured with the name of

a true believer, and to propounded to us for a pattern.

Monsieur Remy being animated by this spirit of Faith, made no reliance upon any thing that came to him by an extraordinary way; resting neither upon Visions, Revelations, inward Motions or Miracles, but solely upon a pure and naked Faith, to carry him to God.

These following lines he writ to his Director, touching a business of great importance:

‘I send you a Paper, which I received three months since, from a person of great vertue, whom you know; which she had kept for me, not daring to trust it with any others: That which confirmeth me in the opinion I had of her solid vertue is, that she never told me any thing, to which I did not find my self predisposed Interiourly: This is as a seal to confirm my former resolutions concerning this, without building any certainty upon the thing it self: for we should be emptied of all reliance upon any thing, and of all reflection, following in simplicity of Faith without dispute, that which our Saviour doth to the soul for the time present, be it concerning this or that.

Going to *Beaulieu*, where Sister Margaret of the B. Sacrament resided (famous for many miracles, which God had wrought in her, and a person very worthy to be visited) he said, That he would neither desire to see her, nor speak with her; onely if our Saviour should make known unto him, that such was his will, he would endeavour it, otherwise he would not seek any occasion for it.

Another time being at *Dijon*, when the blessed Sacrament

Sacrament was exposed, some friends inviting him to draw near to the Altar; he replyed, That he had no need of sight for to believe, and that his Faith went further than what his eyes could shew him.

Hereby we may understand the great Faith of this man of God; and undoubtedly it was with her eyes that he beheld every thing; and by her hands that he accomplished all his actions, and ascended to such a perfection of all Vertues; from whose example we may learn the directest way to attain thereto; which is, stedfastely to believe the verities of Christian Religion, and be perfectly perswaded thereof: As on the contrary, the very source of all our sins and vices, and generally of all the mischiefs in Christianity, is the weakness of Faith, whereby we are neither thoroughly convinced of those sacred Mysteries, nor guided in our affairs by the Rule of Faith: It was our Saviours advice, *Noli timere, tantummodo crede*; Fear not, only believe: If thou believest firmly, thou shalt be delivered from all evils, and be accomplished in all vertue.

C H A P. III.

His Hope.

A STRONG Faith, by a moral necessity, produceth a firm Hope and Charity: A true belief in God, what he is in himself, and what he is to us, will work in us a strong affiance in him, and ardent charity towards him. As appeared in Monsieur *Remy*, who being well grounded upon a firm Faith in God, had likewise an undaunted confidence in him, and an inflamed affection to him.

This confidence was built upon the knowledge and experience of the Power, Goodness, Mercy, and Bounty of God, and of the infinite Merits of our Saviour: And being grounded upon these two Pillars, he hoped all things, and believed that he could accomplish every thing. He used to say, that when he look'd at himself, there was nothing so little wherein he apprehended not difficulty; but when he look'd upon God, he could think nothing impossible to himself: And this distrust of himself was not a disheartned and lazy Humility, but courageous and magnanimous, as is requisite in those who undertake things necessary, though not conscious of any ability of their own for the performance,

He writ to a person concerning these two grand points, which indeed ought to hold the ballance of all our actions, even before God.

'The diffidence you have in your self, makes me very intent upon the good of such a condition, and upon the sure foundation thereof, which the Church desires we should ever conserve, placing at the beginning of every hour of the Divine Office this Virsicle, *Deus in Adjutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina*; O Lord attend unto my help, O Lord make haste to assist me: Whereby we learn that the soul is in continual danger of a Precipice, if not sustained by that infinite mercy, which he is daily to invoke, for her preservation from ruine: And really we should continually fall, if we were not continually supported; therefore the Church hath divided her Office for the seven parts of the day, in that the number of seven comprehends all time: the world being created under this number, to teach us that we should at all times retain this Diffidence of our selves, and Confidence in Gods assistance.

This Hope of his was so great, that in all affairs he relied not upon his own prudence, conduct, care, credit, providence, or any humane contrivancies, but on God alone; saying, That after we have done our duty, with great Diffidence in our selves, we ought to attend wholly on him, and wait his time, without pressing the business; or entrenching upon his Prerogative. And thus he writ to a friend:

'As for my children, I leave them in the hands of the Holy Infant Jesus, without determining any thing concerning them, not knowing what will be
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‘fal to morrow: He giveth me great confidence in
‘his protection, which renders me altogether blind,
‘without wishing any thing, but being ready for his
‘will in every thing.

Guarded with this perfect confidence, he feared nothing, but remained firm and resolute against all accidents and encounters: He walked securely in all places, at all times, in the streets, in the fields, by day and night, travelling through Woods and Forests that were bruted to be dangerous, and frequented by Robbers, without fear, without other defensive weapons than what his confidence in God did arm him with, carrying about him so much goodness, he was above all those frights, which nature is subject to, not moved with sudden alarms or accidents; so that we may call him, The Christian without fear: And to say the truth, there is nothing deserves our fear but sin, since nothing else can hurt us; all other things prove, in fine, advantagious, if we make good use of them.

One day a scaffold, on which he stood with the workmen, erected about his building, fell down and hurt some of them; with which he was not amazed or moved at all, for his own particular. His spirit remained unmoveable, and in the same constancy, being firmly settled upon him that is not subject to a change or alteration.

A friend told him one day, that he was fearful to walk in the evening without a sword, in the streets of *Paris*, and that he desired to be quit of that timorousness, yet could not satisfy himself, to be found unarmed in case of an assault, intreating his advice in the business: Who told him, that of a long time he had left off the use of a sword; and that after he
had

had commended the business to God by prayer, he should follow his inspiration; assuring himself, that his protection over us, is much according to our relying upon him.

These words were found in one of his Letters to his Director:

My soul being armed with Confidence, Faith, and Love, fears neither the Devil, nor Hell, nor all the stratagems of man; neither think I at all on Heaven, or Earth, but only how to fulfil the will of God in every thing.

He hath been noted to do very notable things through the strength of this Vertue, even at such times, when he hath been afflicted with great aridities in his Interiour.

In our aridities and privation, of the sense and feeling of grace (saith he, in a Letter to a friend) is manifested an horrid abnegation of our selves to the will of God; when under Hope, believing against Hope we shew our selves to be true sons of Abraham, Isaac shall not dye, though the knife be at his throat; and in case the true Isaac should, in fine, be crucified, it is but to make us conformable to the Cross, and out of our ashes to raise us to a true and better life.

Thus likewise he writ to his Director:

I have a very clear insight into the great want I have of my Saviour: him I behold in his riches, and my self in my deep poverty; him I look upon invironed in power, and my self in weakness; whereby my spirit being filled with content, by the impressin of these words, Quid est homo, quod memor es ejus? What is man, that thou art mindful of him? doth rest upon a total abandoning of its self into his hands.

Those words, Longanimiter ferens, bearing patiently, dwells long upon my spirit, though I did not at first remember whence they were taken, or what they meant: only this,

this, that I must wait with patience for the commands and approach of my Saviour, without putting my self forward by my own inquest or endeavours, but rest with faith and reverence, begging his grace, and hope in him: But a few days ago, taking up the New Testament, in opening the Book, I did light upon the sixth Chapter to the Hebrews, where the Apostle speaks of Faith and Patience, whereby we obtain the promises; qui fide & patientia hæreditabit promissiones; who by faith and patience shall inherit the promises; and to prove this, brings in the example of Abraham, & sic longanimiter ferens adeptus est repromissionem; and so waiting patiently obtained the promise: This passage touched me to the very heart, and relieved my languishing; together with another passage of S. James, which presented it self to my eye at the same time, Patientes igitur estote fratres, usque ad adventum Domini, ecce agricola expectat preciosum fructum terræ, patienter ferens; Be patient therefore, my brethren, till the coming of our Lord, behold the husbandman waiteth patiently, till he receive the fruit of the earth: Hereby I was settled in peace, upon the solid foundation of Hope and Abnegation.

As this incomparable Vertue enricheth the soul that is perfectly stated in it, with a profound repose, a solid joy, a wonderful courage, and sets it aloft above all Terrestrial things, with a generous contempt of whatsoever the world esteems and desires, giving it a taste of the pleasures that are Eternal (as it is not difficult for him that hath assured hopes of a glorious Kingdom, to set at nought a Pad of straw) so did it communicate to this holy man, all these excellent treasures, and imprinted in his soul all these noble reflections.

Whereby

Whereby he was incited with all his strength, to encourage others in the pursuit of this Vertue, knowing by his own experience, the inestimable benefits thereof, understanding it to be our Lenitive in all disasters, our staff and stay in all weakneses, and our secure haven in all tempests; instructing them continually, how that God, to the end that he might drive us into this Port, and cause us to rest in it, doth frequently permit us to be assaulted with temptations and tryals, the deeplier to engage us to have recourse to him, begging his aid and succour, relying upon him with confidence. The like instruction he gave to a certain person, upon occasion of the Apostles amazement, when they beheld our Saviour walking upon the waters, and took him for a Ghost.

Think you this was without a special providence, that our Saviour suffered his Disciples to go alone into that ship, and permitted a contrary wind to arise? Who knows not, that in the same manner he fashions the souls of the faithful, by his absences, and by their tryals, that he may afterwards manifest his power, upon the seas and tempests, quickning thereby our Faith, and shewing himself to be the Messias and true Deliverer of the world: But observe we how many Christians in their sufferings are affrighted with the Apostles seeing our Saviour marching on the waters: Every thing makes them afraid, the winds, the waves, yea, even Christ himself (that is) the anxieties of their spirit, their own disputings, and also those good counsels that others give them for their establishment upon Christ Jesus, before God: All this appears but as a Ghost to amaze them, unless Christ himself graciously appear yet more unto them, to comfort and strengthen them.

Shall we always want confidence, thus to think Christ a Phantasm? Shall we not address our selves to him in all our necessities, as to our Lord and Deliverer? The Jews brought all their sick folks to him, and he cured them: What is he become a greater Physician of the body, than of the soul? No, no, our little Faith, our little Love, our little Confidence, is the cause of our languishings, and unfruitful anxieties of spirit: Let us go strait to him, and all will be cured.

CHAP. IV.

His love of God.

SEEING the Love of God is without contradiction the most excellent and perfect of all vertues, and that which principally, and above all the rest makes a man a Saint; we cannot doubt, that this holy man was possessed thereof in a were eminent degree, and that he loved God with all his heart. This Love he founded upon his infinite perfections and favours; which may be perceived by what he wrote to his Director in the year 1648. concerning this Queen of all Vertues.

Our Glorious Lord hath from time to time, with his resplendent beams shone upon my soul, quickning her therewith which have appeared in such several manners, and have wrought such great things in a short time, as would take up far more to write them, which really I am afraid to undertake or begin. They all concenter in this one point, the love of God through Jesus Christ, his communication of himself to us by the Incarnation of his Eternal Word, and our

him through the same Word, becoming our brother, conversing with us, and erecting, as it were, a mutual society, that we may be all one in him, and experimentally feel what the love of God is toward us.

In all that I read in the Scripture, I neither understand nor find any thing else but this Love; and perceive clearly, that the very design and end of Christianity is nothing but it. *Finitis autem præcepti est charitas de corde puro*; The end of the Law is love, out of a sincere heart: And this is acquired by Faith in Christ Jesus, as the Apostle saith in the following words, *Fide non ficta*; by Faith unfeigned: Which uniteth and bindeth us to him; whereby we sacrifice unto the Divinity our souls and our bodies, through his Spirit, which conducteth us to the compleat end of the Law, to deliver us up to God, and bring him down to us, in charity, and a gracious inexplicable union, to whom be praise for ever, Amen.

My heart was this morning enlightned with a great Charity, upon these words, That we are set in this world to know, and love, and serve God: Which gave me to understand, that the true effect of the knowledge of God is to annihilate our selves before him: for this knowledge coming to discover unto us that infinite Majesty, the soul abaseth and emptieth it self, through the deep sense of fear and reverence, according to the measure of this discovery: And this is the first step of the soul in this estate.

Next the love of God manifested to us in the giving us his Son, begins to affect us with love: And as the former view of his greatness contracted us in fear, so this his love in Christ Jesus enlargeth and elevateth us to love God in him, and to conceive some good desires according as his Spirit breathes in us: And this is the second step.

The third is, to serve him (that is) by putting this love into practice by good works: For these desires are but blossoms,

souls, and these good works the fruit: I could say much on this subject, if I could express my own feeling of it: For here we find all in all; that is, God revealed by Jesus Christ, loved and served by his Spirit. This Divine Lord sets up a blessed Society, and a Kingdom in our souls, wherein he rules and reigns there by love unspeakable and eternal.

Writing to another person, he expresseth himself thus:

I gave thanks to our Lord, for that he hath disposed you to a perfect Abnegation of your self: This is done, to lead you into the pure estate of love; which without that cannot be pure; in that our love to God consisteth not in receiving gifts and graces from him, but in renouncing all things for him, in an Oblivion of our selves, in suffering constantly and courageously for him.

Thus did he express the nature of Love, not to consist in taking, but giving; and the more and greater matters we give, the more we manifest our Love: This Love carries up the Lover, according to the measure of its flame, continually to think upon his Beloved, to will what may please him, to study his interest, to procure his glory, to do every thing that may work his contentment, and to be extremely apprehensive of any thing that may offend him.

Accordingly, he being all on fire with the love of God, was perfectly sensible of all these effects: All his thoughts, words, and works were the productions of this love; for notwithstanding he practised other virtues, yet they drew their original from this Furnace of Charity, which in him was the beginning, and motive, and end of all: which he testified to his Confidants frequently, and in words so enkindled

dled with it, as were sufficient to warm the most frozen hearts. I have observed (saith one of his Confidants) this Divine fire so ardent in his blessed soul, that the flames thereof have burst forth into his Exterior; and he hath told me, that whenever he pronounced the name of God, he tasted such a sweetness upon his lips; as could not be expressed; and that he was even pierced through with a heavenly suavity. To another he writ about nine or ten years ago, that he could not conceal from him, how he felt a fire in his heart, which burnt and consumed without ceasing.

Another of them assures; that he hath often seen him enflamed with this love of God, that he appeared even like one besides himself; and how he told him, when these transportings were upon him, that he was ready to cast himself into the fire to testify his Love to God: and in one of his Letters to a friend, he concludes thus:

I must now hold my peace, yet when I cease to speak, the fire within, that consumes me, will not let me rest: Let us burn then, and burn wholly, and in every part, for God: since we have no being but by him, why then do we not live to him? I speak it aloud, and it would be my crown of glory, to seal it with my blood, and this I utter to you with great freedom.

In a Letter to another thus:

I know not what your intent was, to put into your Letter these words, Deus meus, & omnia; my God, and my all: Only you invite thereby, to return the same to you, and to all creatures, My God, and my all; my God, and my all; my God, and my all. If perhaps you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it; think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation,

vation, and not express my sense thereof! Likewise, be it known to you therefore that he is my God, and my all; And if you doubt of it, I shall speak it a hundred times over. I shall add no more; for any thing else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with my God, and my all: I leave you therefore in this happy state of Jubilation, and conjure you to beg for me of God, the solid sense of these words.

Being transported with this love of God, it wrought in him an incredible zeal of his honour, which he procur'd and advanced a thousand ways: Which may be understood partly by what we have already writ, and several others which are unknown, because either they were wholly spiritual, or concealed by him even from his most intimate friends. The 12 of March, in the year 1645. he writ thus to his Director, upon this subject:

One day being transported with an earnest desire to be all to God, and all consumed for him; I offered up to him all I could, yea, and all that I could not: I would willingly have made a Deed of Gift to him of Heaven and Earth, and if they had been mine. And in another way, I would willingly have been the underling of all mankind, and in the basest estate possible; yea, and if supported by his grace, I could have been content, to have suffered eternal pains with the damned; if any glory might have accrew'd to him thereby. In this disposition of a calm zeal, there is no sort of Martyrdom, no degree of greatness or littleness, of honour or disgrace, that passed not through my spirit, and which my soul would not readily have embraced for the advancement of his glory: Here a man would be content to be a King, to govern all; or the meanest Beggar, or most miserable Wretch, to suffer all for him; and this without reason, through an excess of reason. It is an impossible thing to understand, how in so short time the soul should

should wish such different things, and a large discourse would be too narrow to declare one circumstance thereto belonging: All I could do in this condition, was to give up my liberty to God, writing the Dced in paper, and signing it with my own blood.

See here the zeal of a man, all on fire with the love of God, where likewise his conformity to his will, an infallible mark of this love, is very observable. Those persons who knew him perfectly, report, that this intimate union of his will to Gods will, was one of his singular graces; and himself declared, that he was constantly in this blessed frame, to which he had applied himself more particularly for several years, in which he made it evidently appear, that the object and end of all his actions, was the Divine will, into which his own was wholly absorpt.

He writ thus to one concerning the sickness and death of the Countess of Castres, to whom he had (as we have formerly mentioned) a very near relation, founded upon grace.

I must tell you, that during my absence from the Countess of Castres; my heart was tenderly sensible of her pain, knowing that she suffered very much: But my desire submits to the Order of God, and when that is signified to me, he gives me grace to obey. Coming to Paris, I received the news of her death; when I resigned my self wholly to God, attending his good pleasure for what would follow.

Another time he writ thus to his director:

I have been held these three weeks with a fever, together with a destuxion, and an exceeding great weakness; and my frame of spirit during this condition, hath been a simple prosecution of, and adherence to the will and pleasure of God: I discover nothing in particular worth writing to you, saving

that I have a heart ready to receive any afflictions that can befall me. I desire whatever is decreed from above, and beg it with all my heart.

We have set down before, how that in the year, 1641. one of his children whom he dearly loved, departed this life. When the news was brought him, he spake not one word, nor shewed the least disturbance, but absolutely submitted to the order of God, corresponding thereunto in a perfect reconciliation of his own affection to the child, and his great loss of him.

At the end of the year, 1643. his Lady fell desperately sick, even to Death, being left of all her Physicians, speechless, and without sense: but he notwithstanding the deep resentment of such a heavy loss, and a business that touched him to the quick, manifested such an absolute conformity to the Will of God, as brake forth into these words:

I cannot deny, but my nature is deeply affected with the sense of so great a loss, yet my spirit is filled with so wonderful a joy, to see my self in such a state, as to give up and sacrifice to my God, a thing so near and dear to me, that if civility did not forbid it, I would make appear outwardly, and give some publick testimony of my readiness thereunto.

By this heroick deportment, he evidenced that the Will of God was so absolutely his, that he not only will'd that which he will'd, though never so difficult, but that he will'd it as God doth, that is, with much pleasure and content: for so God doth not simply will and act things, but wills and acts them with infinite delight, being in himself most infinitely happy. But it pleased God to restore his Lady to her health, with respect (as we may piously imagine) to this heroicall carriage of his faithful Servant; as likewise to

a Vow

a Vow he made to our blessed Lady, for the obtaining thereof.

Neither did his conformity only go thus far, but advanced further yet, even to things of a higher consideration, referring to his perfection and salvation; for notwithstanding that he earnestly aspired to Holiness, and endeavoured thereafter with an unspeakable courage, fervour, and diligence, yet all this was with an entire resignation of himself to the designs of God, concerning himself.

For opening his Case to his Director upon this point, he writ thus:

My present condition consists in an adherence of my will to whatsoever God is pleased concerning me, and this I am sensible of from the Bottom of my soul: I have of late undergone very great arduities of spirit (except some few intervals) where all is laid open, and my soul resigneth herself to God in an inexpressible manner, from which she remains full of certainty and of truths, which will not easily vanish, though they cannot without difficulty be unfolded.

Having writ and signed with his own Blood, a Deed of Gift of his Liberty, as we have mentioned before, he writ thus to the same person concerning it.

From that instant, God hath bestowed on me such a conformity to his Will, that as I acknowledge all things to be guided by his hand, so likewise I receive every thing from it.

And to another intimate Friend he writ thus:

‘The Party (meaning himself) hath since that time felt such a wonderful great conformity to the Will of God, that he can will nothing, but what God willet; neither can he understand how any man should will any thing else: this makes every thing pass smooth and currently.

This disposition of Spirit made him look upon things, not in themselves, but as contain'd in the Will of God, and this he gave as a chief advice to attain to Perfection.

It becometh a Soul (saith he) to give up it self to God; walking on in Simplicity in all its operations; applying it self to every thing, not for the thing it self, but in order to the Will of God, not engaged at all to it, but to God, obeying and honouring him in every thing.

And from this perfect subordination to the Will of God, sprung his admirable Tranquility of mind; and from this Fountain flowed those Rivers of Peace and profound Repose, which he possessed in so great perfection, that from the most sudden surprisals, his Spirit was not altered one jot, neithes were his inferiour faculties of body put into any disorder, as himself acknowledgeth.

For thus he writ to me one day :

I comprehend not that thing you call Mortification: If one lives in this estate of Conformity; for such finding no resistance in his Spirit, is not capable of it: Whoso wilkth whatever God wilkth, is daily content, let what will happen.

CHAP. V.

His great Reverence and Fear of God, which produceth in him a most admirable purity of Conscience.

ONE of the most excellent dispositions of the Soul, in her interiour Life, is that of great Reverence in the presence of God; as the Scriptures mention, that the Angels continually abase and cast down themselves with Reverence before his Sacred Majesty: And Monsieur Renty was deeply affected with this noble part of Devotion, speaking to God with so great Reverence, as it proceeded into Trembling.

And this unspeakable Respect unto Gods Greatness, caused him to walk often in the Fields bareheaded, in the heat of the Sun, or any other unseasonable weather: And being asked by a near Friend, what it was that kept him in such a constant awfulness, and how he attained to that wonderful Reverence he bore to God, in all Places, in all Employments, and at all times. He answered, The sight of his glorious Majesty, which continually seems present by me, produceth in me this effect, keeping me in exceeding great awe, with a deep sense of his greatness, and my own vileness, and nothingness in comparison of him. A more in the Sun you will say is little, but I am far less than that before God, being indeed nothing.

Writing to his Director, *June*, 1. 1647, he saith :

‘ I have been busied all this last month in studying my own baseness, I am seized with a great confusion, accompanied with exceeding Reverence before God, as one that hath his Eyes cast down before the Throne of his Majesty, not daring to look up.

And to another Person he writ thus :

‘ Let us behave our selves in the Presence of God, as the Men of the World do before their Prince; who notwithstanding they be Men of spirit, and have their Heads full of weighty business, yet stand bare in his presence, and with modest and humble behaviour forbear to speak, not listening to any thing but what he speaks, forgetting all other Business: And all this they are obliged to by Civil Respect, and pay this Duty to one, perhaps, inferior to themselves in Natural Parts. How much more should the Holyness, the Majesty, the Infinite Greatness of God, ravish us from our selves, and work in us a most profound Reverence.

Behold here what wonderful deep sense of his own vileness, this holy man bore in the Presence of God; which indeed well becometh not only Sinners, but the Holyest Men upon Earth. He that beholds the Sun from a Valley, when it riseth and appears upon the point of a high Mountain, thinks him that stands above, to be near it, and that he is able almost to reach it with his Hand, when the same Man notwithstanding, beholds it at a vast distance above his Head; and though in reality he is nearer it than the other in the Valley, yet within such a small proportion, as scarce deserves to be named, in respect of the total distance.

In like manner God, in his Greatness, his Majesty, and all his Infinite Perfections, is so far above, not onely us that are most imperfect, but even all those that are arrived to the top of the greatest perfections, that all of us must debase and cast down our selves, with a most profound annihilation in his presence.

This great respect he bore to the presence of God, together with his ardent love to him (of which we have spoken in the former Chapter) imprinted in him a horrible aversion to the least thing that might offend him ; as likewise, a wonderful purity of Conscience. His Confessors report, that he excelled herein even to astonishment ; and that the Prince of Darkness had very little in him. He told a familiar Friend one day, that it much afflicted him when he was to Confess to any others besides his ordinary Confessor, because they not understanding his condition, could not so well apprehend him ; and that he was often troubled to find something to Confess to them.

And this purity will be best known to us, by its contrary ; viz. his Sins, which he was accustomed to send monthly to his Director, a Letter, who lived a great distance from him ; and these were sent by common Messengers, signed with his own hand, which were subject to be intercepted, an evidence of an heroick humility, in a Person of his quality.

Take here what he writ *Novemb. 27. 1646.*

‘ I purpose, if you allow of it, to put my self into a regular course, to give you an account of my state the twenty fifth day of every Month : (and then coming to his faults he saith) ‘ For my faults I give you here a few, which I can remember, of those many I have committed.

‘ Upon

Upon two several occasions ; I spake two words passionately to my servants.

I omitted twice to recite the prayer, Angelus Domini, through forgetfulness.

In another Letter to him, he writ thus :

‘I am as blind (or rather more) in espying my
‘my faults, as in other things: Onely in general, I
‘have a deep sense of my misery; and I can say,
‘that I am not ignorant of my unworthyness, and
‘that lamentable corruption which sin hath wrought
‘in me; the sad effects whereof, have been these this
‘month, Speaking with one about a deed of Charity;
‘which was, to dispose of some Orphans, for their
‘education in the true Religion, I named inconsider-
‘ately two Gentlemen their Kinsmen, who had re-
‘fused to be employed therein.

‘I mentioned the faults of a certain person, to ano-
‘ther, that knew of them before, upon design to
‘make him understand, that he was in a better con-
‘dition: But my Conscience presently reproached
‘me, that it had been sufficient to have spoken of
‘the good conditions of this party without mention-
‘ing the evil of the other: In which I confess I med-
‘dled too much in that affair, In sum, I am a
‘stragler from God, and a ground over-run with
‘thorns;

In another:

‘My faults are as one great heap, which I
‘feel in my self obstructing the light from God,
‘I am strangely remiss and ungrateful: I assure you
‘I find much in my self, to confound and humble
‘me.

‘Having been employed a whole day in taking
‘up a business, and in the evening seeing one come
‘into

into the room, who was reputed by the company, to have maintained an untruth, I said inconsiderately, and for want of care, Behold the man that maintained that falsity.

In another :

I am sensible of my fault, in mentioning a trifle, not without some Vanity ; viz. That I had been the means of placing a Servant in such a great Family : I had a motion within me, not to have spoken it, and yet it escaped from me ; of which I am exceeding sensible, because I should have been faithful to the spirit of God.

Also I took place at the Table of a Priest, I made great difficulty of it at first, but I knew not how I yielded not to the Priest, but to a Person of Quality present, that pressed me to it.

Lo here some faults of this Servant of God, which questionless discover the great purity of his Conscience, which was so bright, as to shew these failings, which in some manner, might pass for perfections ; or much like those spots which curious Eyes discover in the Stars.

And truly, these may demonstrate, to what height of Purity and Innocency, a Soul that is watchful over herself, may arrive, seeing a Gentleman of his Birth and Age, in a Secular Life, and the throng of so great Employments, attained hereto ; only if we use the like diligence, and be faithful to the Spirit of God, the only means to attain to this perfection.

CHAR.

CHAP. VI.

His great Reverence to Holy Things.

Monsieur Renty did not onely carry a great Reverence to God, but likewise to all things belonging to his Service, and to all Holy things; which sprang from that sense of Vertue and Religion imprinted in his soul, producing the like fruits Externourly.

In the first place, he had a singular respect to all Holy places; and it will be very hard to recount, with what Respect and Devotion he behaved himself in Churches. At his entrance, his demeanour was exceeding modest, and religiously grave; He never sat down there, nor put on his hat, not so much as in Sermon time; he would abide there as long as possibly he could, and hath been observed, upon great Festivals, to remain there upon his knees for seven or eight hours: He was very silent in the Church, and if any person of any condition spoke to him, his answer was short; and in case the business required longer time, he would carry him forth, or some other way free himself thereof.

Secondly, he used great veneration to all Ecclesiastical persons, even to the meanest; but the Reverence he gave to Priests was wonderful. He would never take the upper hand of them, without extream violence, as appears by that passage in the former Chapter. Whensoever he met them, he saluted them with profound humility, and in his Travel,

would

would light off his Horse to do it, and render them all honour possible. When they came to visit him, he entertain'd them with great Respect, at their departure waiting on them to the Gate; and if any dined at his Table, gave them the upper Place, which Civility he observ'd to his own Chaplain.

When any Mission was in any of his Lordships, he entertained the Missioners apart, where they were served in plate, when other Gentlemen and persons of quality that visited him, were onely in pewter, waving herein all human respects. A Nobleman and his Lady came one day to him upon a visit, accompanied with a Priest, that was Tutor to their children. After he had received them, observing the Priest at the lower end of his Hall, with some of their Retinue, quitting civilly the Nobleman and his Lady, he went down to the Priest, shewing great respect to him, as to the most honourable person of the company.

In fine, his opinion of the Priesthood was so venerable, looking upon it as the most potent means for procuring the glory of God; that he said to a friend, That he had a design to enter into that Order, if God should ever bring him into a condition capable of it.

And as he had this singular Reverence toward them, so likewise had he an earnest desire that they, and generally all Ecclesiastical persons, should understand the excellency of the condition, to which God had call'd them, leading a life agreeable to their Dignity. He writ to his Director in the year, 1645. upon occasion of several Ecclesiasticks of his acquaintance, who correspond not to their Profession and Obligation, that his heart melted into sorrow for them,

them, and that he prostrated himself before his Saviour, and begged with tears for some Apostolick Spirits to be sent amongst us our poor Fishermen;

Give us, O Lord our poor Fishermen, I often repeated; I meant the Apostles. But this word ran much in my mind, not being able to use any other; and my spirit wrought much upon these words, *Pêcheurs & Pecheurs, Fishermen and Sinners*. I look upon these men, simple indeed in their Exterior, but great Princes in their Interior, whose life and outward appearance vile, in the eyes of men, and estranged from the pomp of the world; converted souls, by their Sanctity, by their Prayers, by their Vigilance and restless Labours. And herein I discover a great mistake ordinary in the world, which believes, that outward greatness and pomp, is the way to keep up ones credit, and render him more capable to do good to his neighbours: But we are foully mistaken for it is grace that both power upon souls, and an holy and humble life, that gaineth hearts.

With the same spirit he bewailed much, the hally and irreverent reciting of their Offices in many places.

Being this day present at Divine Service (saith he in a Letter to me) many words therein put me in mind of the holiness thereof; and yet I could not without much grief, take notice of some chanting it hastily, without devotion, or spirit, and others hearing it accordingly: Good God, what pity is this! where is our faith? My eyes were ready to run over with tears, but I forced my self to refrain them.

In the third place, he had a great respect and love to Religious Persons, and all such as dedicated themselves to the service of God, encouraging and assisting them with all his might.

This Letter he writ to one, that was assailed with great combats,

I must needs let you know the tender resentment I have of those tempests, and present storms that you endure: I know no reason, why men should alarm you thus; nor that you have done any thing against the Gospel, which is the only thing they should condemn you for: I believe it will be very hard for them to gather a just cause of reproach from your design. For my own part, I do not wonder at these crosses, its sufficient to know, that you belonging to Jesus Christ, and the desire to follow him, reckoning contradiction to be your portion in these days of your flesh. Be you only firm in your confidence upon our Lord, suffering no storms from without to trouble you, or obscure that light that hath guided and pressed you to this business. I pray God deliver you from the reasonings of flesh and blood, which often multiply upon us in such matters; assuring you, that if you give not ear to them, God will manifest himself unto you (that is) he will comfort and fortifie you, in faith, and in experience of the gift of his Holy Spirit.

To another he writ thus: Blessed for ever be the Blessed Infant Jesus, for the happy entrance of those two devout souls into Religion, which you mention: I shall rejoyce exceedingly in their perseverance, the best argument of their effectual calling. If the other party you know of, had a little more confidence and courage, to break her fetters, it would be a great step for her. And surely, there is not need of so much prudence and deliberation, to give up our selves to him, who to the Gentiles is foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling block. This world is a strange cheat and amusement, insinuating into, and infecting every thing. God hath no need of our good parts, nor of our rare qualities, who commonly confounds the wisdom of the wise by little things, which he chuseth,

chuseth. Blessed be that littleness, which is held for weakness, and yet overthroweth all the Power and Prudence of flesh.

Treating with some Religious Persons, he seemed, as it were, rapt on a sudden; with the consideration of their happy condition, speaking to them thus:

O how happy are you my Sisters!

After which, falling upon a discourse of their Vocation, he speak so effectually, as wrought in them, an ample acknowledgment of their obligation to God; and a courage to proceed in well doing.

This following Letter he writ to a Gentlewoman newly entred into Religion, who next under God, did owe her calling to him.

I thank my Saviour with all Reverence, for those good dispositions to your profession, signified in your Letter. I understand, and am sensible of abundant grace wrought in you, whereby I assure my self; of a noble progress I am to expect, from the bounty of God; who is to that soul that gives herself to him, *Merces magna nimis; Her exceeding great reward.* You have made a leap which puts you in a new world: Blessed and adored be God who in the fulness of time, out of his wisdom and love to a soul, sends his Son to it to redeem it from the Law of Servitude, and translates it into the Adoption of his Sons. This hath he now wrought in you, in a more Special manner; and the excellentest way that could be. You was never united to Jesus Christ, as you are now, by your holy Profession: You had heretofore something to give, that was never before engaged, and he something to receive, that was not formerly

‘ formerly in his possession : But now all is given,
‘ and all is received, and the mutual donation is accom-
‘ plished : no more Self, no more Life, no more In-
‘ heritance, but in Jesus Christ : He is all, in all things,
‘ until the time, that (according to the Apostle) he
‘ delivering us up all, and wholly to his Father, his
‘ Father also shall be in Jesus, and in all his members,
‘ all in all, for ever. Amen.

Fourthly, he had a very great Devotion to all the Saints in Heaven, but more particularly to *S. Joseph*, and *S. Teresa*; whom in the year, 1640. he chose for his Patroness; and above all the rest, to the Saint of Saints, the B. Virgin; in testimony whereof, he dedicated himself to her Service at *Ardilliers*, then, when he designed himself for a Carthusian. And in the year, 1640. he desired to be admitted into the Society erected to her honour, in the house of the professed of the Jesuits of *S. Lewis*, and for many years, he wore a Seal upon his Arm, with her Image graven, where with he sealed all his Letters. We have Likewise mentioned, how he gave to an Image of *Nostre-Dame de Grace*, a heart of Crystal, set in Gold, to testify to that *Admirable Mother* (as he used often to stile her) his love; and that with this heart, he resigned up to her his own.

Finally, this man of God, most entirely honoured and loved the Spouse of Christ, his Holy Church, reverencing every thing that came from her, making great account of all her ceremonies, saying, That he found a certain grace, and particular vertue in the prayers and customs of the Church : conforming himself most readily to her practises. Being present commonly at High-Mass in *Paris*, he would go to the Of-

fering amongst the people, and ordinarily with some poor man: He assisted at ceremonies, where it was rare to find, not onely men of his quality, but far more excellent persons; as, the consecrating of the Fonts in the Holy Week, at long processions, in all extremities of weather.

Upon which occasion, he writ one day to a friend:

Our procession goeth this day into the Suburbs, and since our Saviour hath favoured us with this great mercy, to be of this little flock, we ought to follow his standard; and I take it for a signal honour, to follow the Cross, which way, our holy Mother, the Church, leads us; there being nothing in her, but what is glorious, since she acts in every thing, by the Spirit of Religion, in the presence of God; whereby she unfolds great mysteries, to those that are humble and respective.

From which expressions and actions, we may infer, that he being a man of such quality, and taken up with such a multitude of business, had a very reverend esteem of all the ceremonies of the Church; otherwise he would never have rendered such Obedience and Honour to them.

And though it be most true, that he highly honoured these ceremonies, yet he desired likewise, that by the Exterior pomp that appeared to the eyes, Christians might be led on to the Interior, and more Spiritual, complaining, that the outward Magnificence wherewith Churches are adorned, do often stay and amuse them, and instead of carrying them on to God their chief end, diversifies them from him. To this purpose he writ thus to a friend:

‘ We should take notice of that simplicity, in which the Divine Mysteries were conveyed to us, that we may not be held too long with the Splendor, in which at this day they are celebrated: These thoughts came into my mind, in hearing the Organs and Church Musick, and beholding the rich Ornaments, used in the Divine Office; we must look thorow this state, at that spirit of Simplicity, Purity, and Humility, of their primitive Institution: Not but that these are holy and useful; but that we should pass thorow it to the Simplicity and Poverty of *Bethlehem, Nazareth, Egypt, the Wildernis and the Cross.*

But above all, he was singularly devoted to an union of spirit and affection, and vniversal communion of all good things, with all the faithful, in all places of the world; and to be admitted into the communion of Saints, being an Article of our Creed, very dear unto him.

Wherefore he highly valued all, of each Nation and Profession, without espousing any particular spirit or interest, to respect one above others, to magnifie one, and derogate from another: He honoured all Ecclesiasticks Secular, and communicated with them concerning all his Exercises of Charity for his Neighbour: he gave great respect to all Parish Priests, was very serviceable to him of his own Parish: he frequented the Societies of the Religious, loved and made use of them for direction of his conscience.

And notwithstanding the variety, and several orders of them in the Church, yet was not his heart divided, but affected with an equal esteem, and approbation; and a general affection to all, according to their degree, being guided herein by

one Spirit; (*viz.*) that of Christ Jesus, which enliveneth all the faithful, as members of his body; in the same manner, as our bodily members, notwithstanding they be different; in sight, figure, and offices, are knit together, and all perfectly agree, because they are all quickned by the same Soul: All mis-intelligence and disagreeing is a sign of two spirits that rule there; and division is the principal of death.

Concerning this communion of Saints, he one day suffered some difficulty: Whereupon he writ this excellent Letter to his Director:

‘I find experimentally, a real union both in light and faith with the party I mentioned; which is more than palpable, giving me assurance, that we are all one. Upon this occasion I shall acquaint you, in what manner my mind hath been busied these few last days, and is yet full of it; and to the end my relation may be more intelligible, I shall take the matter somewhat higher.

‘The operation I have found in my self for these two or three years, hath constantly held me fixed in the pursuit of our Saviour Christ, to find in him Eternal Life before God the Father, through the influence of his Spirit; of which I have from time to time given you account: And now I confess to you that though for that time I also honoured from the bottom of my heart, our B. Lady, the Saints and Angels and have been desirous to express it upon all occasions; yet so it was, that their presence and their commerce was obscured in, and as it were, very remote from my soul.

‘ I assure you, that those thoughts hath frequently
‘ run in my mind ; saying thus within my self, I so
‘ much honour our Lady, and some other Saints and
‘ Angels, and I know not where they are : I lifted up
‘ my heart easily towards them, but there was no
‘ presence of them at all, at least such as I now perceive
‘ it. Some months ago, I possessed an opening, and
‘ a light in my soul, accompanied with powerful
‘ effects, concerning love and dear union with God
‘ making me to conceive inexplicable things of God,
‘ the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (who is perfect
‘ Charity, not by the reasonings and discourses of
‘ the understanding, but by a single view, most by
‘ one touch penetrating the heart with love : And I
‘ beheld, how the Son of God our Saviour, came to
‘ advance us by his Incarnation, into this love, uni-
‘ ting himself to us, whereby to reduce us all into this
‘ intimate and sweet union, untill he shall have com-
‘ pleted us all in himself to be made, all of us, one
‘ day, all in God, after he hath delivered up his
‘ Kingdom to his Father, *Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus ;*
‘ *That God may be all in all :* And we enter into this blef-
‘ sed union, with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

‘ Some ten or twelve days since, being in my mor-
‘ ning prayers, on my knees, to pray unto God, I
‘ perceived in my self, that I could find no entrance
‘ unto him, onely I kept my self there much hum-
‘ bled, but the sight of the Father, the access to him
‘ of the Son (with whom I ordinarily converse, with
‘ as much confidence, as if he were yet upon earth)
‘ and the assistance of the holy Ghost, seemed at a
‘ strange distance, withheld from me ; and I per-
‘ ceived an unworthiness in my self, so great, so
‘ real, and so penetrating, that I could no more lift

‘up the eyes of my soul to heaven, than these of
‘my body.

‘Than was it given me to understand, that I had
‘really that unworthiness which I felt. But that I
‘must seek my entry to God, and to our Saviour,
‘in the Communion of Saints: Whereupon I was on
‘an instant possessed with a wonderful presence, of
‘the respect and love, and union of the B. Virgin,
‘the Angels and Saints, which I am not able to ex-
‘press, nor to utter the greatness and solidity of this
‘grace: for this union is life Life Eternal, and the
‘Ecclesiastical Paradise; and this union is both for the
‘Saints in Heaven, and those on earth which I have
‘almost always in full view and presence.

‘From thenceforward I understood, that we were
‘not made by God, to be alone, and separate from
‘others, but to be united unto them, and to compose
‘with them one divine total: Even as a beautiful
‘stone, fitted for the head of a column, it altogether
‘unprofitable, till it be settled in its place, and cemen-
‘ted to the body of the building, without which it hath
‘neither its preservation, its beauty, nor its end. This
‘meditation left me in the love and in the true and
‘experimental connexion of the communion and
‘communication of Saints; yet with a due order of
‘those to whom I am more united, which is my Life
‘in God, and in Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the contents of that Letter.

C H A P. VII.

His devotion to the Holy Sacrament.

ONE of the greatest Devotions of this holy man, was that to the Holy Eucharist, considered both as a Sacrifice, and as a Sacrament; of which he had ever an incredible esteem, honouring it with all possible Reverence and affecting it with tender Love, blessing and praising God for its institution, and exciting both by his word and pen, the whole world to do the same.

He was accustomed to say, that it was instituted to stay and place our Saviour, God and Man, in the midst of us, to obtain for us, all the benefits of Grace, whereof we are capable here, and to dispose us for those of Glory. That the great design of God in the Incarnation, Life, Death and Resurrection of his Son, was to convey unto us his Spirit, to be unto us Life Eternal; which Spirit he hath taught us by his Word, merited for us by his Death, and doth more confer upon us from his estate of Glory. And the better to convey this unto us, to cause us to live thereby, and dye in our selves, he giveth himself to us in this most Holy Sacrament, Dead, Raised up, and Glorified, to produce in us, by the operation of his Spirit, these two effects of Death and Life.

He was not only present every day at Mass, but took it for a very great Honour to serve the Priest himself: He received every day, if not hindered by very important business, or some pressing occasion

of Charity. And as the honour we render to this B. Sacrament, consists not in often receiving, but in communicating well and perfectly; he took all care thereof, that could be expected from one of so holy life, and eminent Piety.

He spent many hours, in prayers, upon his knees, before the Blessed Sacrament. And being once asked by a friend, How he could remain there so long: He answered, That there he recreated his spirit, receiving from thence refreshment and new forces; and yet sometimes he encountered with some trouble in that Devotion, which may be gathered from this Letter to his Director, dated the 27 of June, in the year, 1647.

I have been very poor all this month, I know not whether I was ever so lumpish, both in spirit and body, as I was upon the Festival day of the Blessed Sacrament. I was present at Service, at Procession, at Mass, at Communion, heard the Sermon, at Vespers, and Compline; but like a very beast, not knowing how to demean my self, either kneeling, or standing, I was in a kinde of restless condition of body, and very wandering and distracted in spirit; only I knew well, that in the bottom of my soule, I had a desire to honour God through his Son Christ Jesus.

After Compline, I found my self so dull and heavy, that seeing my self unable to remain before the Blessed Sacrament, for I fell all along, I resolved to try, whether upon retireing, and refreshing my self a little, I should be any better: But for all that, I found my self more tired and discomposed in body and minde, than if I had had the courage to have lain there still all along upon the ground.

Hereupon I reflected upon what I had formerly read, in a Paper you sent me concerning a certain vertuous person, afflicted with the like stupefaction; Whereupon I rose up, and

and set my self under the Crucifix, before the Holy Sacrament, determining to honour my Saviour in all conditions and tempers, Being thus upon my knees, by the Divine assistance, I got the victory over my self, and my spirit was enlarged: Whereupon I received from the Blessed Sacrament this illumination, That to become Bread (which hath relation to that Mysterie) I must first be ground, like the corn, then kneaded with water, and lastly, baked in the oven. And that this was the right way to be incorporated into that mystical Bread, our Lord and Saviour; and at the same instant that this was revealed unto me, I felt in my self, a vehement desire to be thus dealt with, which hath remained in me ever since. And now I understand, that to enter into a Spiritual estate, we must, like the corn, before we be sent to the mill, be first threshed, and winnowed from our earthly impurities, and that the grain is not fit for use, till it be pure, and that it becomes not fruitful, till it first dyeth in the ground.

The meditation upon this material Bread, hath taught me great Mysteries (during this Octave) of the Heavenly Bread in the Sacrament; (viz.) how that Jesus Christ, being bruised and broken in his Passion, giveth himself to us for food, to the end that we might set forth and express, his Death, his Love, and Vertues in our life. And in this condition I now find my self much in Love with Jesus Christ, desirous to be wholly to him, and to render unto him in my affliction, this which he hath given me, and my goods, and my body, and my soul, and my time and my eternity. I have a great thirst upon me to serve him, and other longings, which I reserve to communicate, untill I have the happiness to see you.

This his singular affection to the Blessed Sacrament, caused him to write in Capital Letters upon a Chimney-Piece, in his Castle at Citry, Blessed for ever by the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar: This made him walk

walk on foot to visit all Churches within two Leagues round about him, to see in what decency the Blessed Sacrament was reserved there; and to bestow in several parts, a great number of Silver Pixes, to keep it in, upon poor Parishes; and Tabernacles likewise, which he made, and gilded with his own hands, having a great dexterity in all such Manual works. Of which he writ something to me, the 26th. of September, in the year, 1646.

Since Advent, I began a work, which I have designed this long time; viz. at such times, as my urgent occasions will give leave, which commonly is after Supper till Prayer-time, to Practice some handicraft-work; where having all my Tools, I make Tabernacles for the Blessed Sacrament; and if I finish but one in a Month, my time will not be ill spent; for they may be serviceable to some poor Churches that want them.

Guided by the same zeal, in the year 1641. he cast to set up in his Parish of S. Paul, a company of Devout Ladies, every one in their turn, to spend an hour in Prayer every Afternoon, before the Sacrament. He wrote a short Treatise of the conduct of this Devotion, and the grounds of undertaking it; the chief whereof was, upon the consideration that our Saviour being continually in this adored Mystery, to give himself to us, it was therefore but reasonable that some Persons should be present in the Church, to render to him their Homage and Honour, and correspondent to that his desire, of giving himself to us. This Treatise he presented with all humility and due respect to his Parish-Priest, for his consent, and the putting it in practice, if he thought it fitting; which was done accordingly, and continueth to this day with great Edification and Profit; and succeedeth

so happily, that the like Institution is taken up in several other Parishes and Towns; as at *Dijon*, where Monsieur *Renty* erected it, at his first journey thither, with great Zeal and Courage, overcoming several difficulties and oppositions against it.

He likewise excited several Persons in his Parish, to accompany the Holy Sacrament, when it was carried to the Sick; in such sort, that a great company of Men and Women, were seen to follow our Blessed Saviour with lighted Torches; where he attended likewise with great diligence, notwithstanding his daily employments, spending for a long while almost all the morning in this Holy Exercise, in all Seasons of heat and cold.

One day, amongst others, being very foul, and he much distempered with Rheum, he was wish'd to forbear that time, being so very incommodious for him to walk bare-headed, to the great prejudice of his health: All which moved him not one jot, but he went chearfully thorow these difficulties; and which is very observable, at his return was Cured of his Rheum.

Another time, accompanying the Holy Sacrament, a Coach with Six Horses passed by, without stopping, or saluting the same; whereupon he, suspecting them to be ill-affected persons, and much offended with their impiety, stirred up with zeal, to defend the honour of his Master, adventured to admonish them of their duty; and casting himself before the Horses (with much hazard to his person) stayed the Coach in its Career, and engaged the persons to do reverence thereto, by staying till it was past; which heroick Action, caused admiration in all the beholders.

C H A P. VIII.

His Prayer.

THIS Chapter and the next, contain some things in them, that cannot so well be expressed by way of History, by reason that things of such difficult nature, must be dilated upon to make them intelligible.

In this Chapter we shall speak of his Prayer, which we may fitly term the large Channel which conveys the gifts of God into our Soul, the most certain means for procuring of help, and all graces requisite to our Salvation, the most universal instrument, whereof we serve our selves in our spiritual Life, to perform all the functions thereof for our advancement in the Purgative way, for rooting our Vices in the Illuminative way, for the practice of Vertue; and in the Unitive, for arriving unto an Union with God, in which consisteth our perfection. All the Saints that ever were, have set so high a value upon this Divine Action, that quitting as it were, all other Affairs, they have passed their Days and Nights in Prayer; many have left their Crowns and Scepters, and retired into Monasteries and Solitudes, to have the honour to converse with God more secretly, and for longer time.

Monseigneur de Renty enlightned by their beams, and treading in their steps, gave himself to this exercise, with such care and diligence, that we may aver, this
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to have been his ordinary employment, and his whole life a trade of praying.

I mean not here his vocal Prayers, having spoken of them before : I affirm, that his affection was exceeding great to mental Prayer, understanding well the necessity thereof, as that whereby we come more intimately to know, and reap the benefit of all Christian verities ; which until they be known, are not at all beneficial ; and the utility thereof, to learn a man what he is, and enable him to exercise the real acts of virtue, in the inward life and spirit of them ; elevating the soul to a familiar conference with God ; an honour more incomparable glorious, though but for one quarter of a hour, than is the most intimate communication with the greatest Monarchs for whole years together ; like as we esteem it a greater honour to discourse freely and familiarly with a King, the space of one hour, than many years with a Peasant.

Moreover, he well understood the different manners of this Prayer, and how it ascends by four steps. The first is Prayer of Reasoning and Discourse. The second, that of the Will and Affections. The third, that of Union or Contemplation ; which divides it self into two Branches : *viz.* in Contemplation active or acquisite, and Contemplation passive or infused ; which passive Contemplation, is the fourth and highest round of this Ladder of Prayer.

Prayer of the Understanding, and of Discourse, or Meditation, is an application of the Spirit, to understand some Vertues of his Salvation, which he apprehended not before ; reasoning and discoursing thereon within himself ; ruminating upon its Causes, Effects, and Circumstances of Time, Place, Manner, and

and Persons belonging to it, to draw from thence Arguments of Good Life; going from one circumstance and point to another, from the Causes to their Effects, and so backward, which is called Reasoning; and, because our mind is quick and ready in this operation; not only nimble to go, but run in it, and therefore it is termed also Discourse.

He began at this step, and made some stay upon it, where indeed every one ought to begin, and rest; untill he is called by God to another; because the most proper and natural way, that God hath given men, to come to understand and affect any thing, is that of Consideration and Reasoning; wherefore each one must serve himself herewith, till he be advanced higher.

The ordinary subject which he took for these Meditations, were the Life, Passion, and Death of our Saviour: which without all contradiction, is the most profitable of all others, since he is set before us for our Pattern; in the imitation and expression whereof, consists our Perfection, and Life Eternal.

After some time, having been faithful in this first stage, he passed to the second, that of Will and Affection; being called with an *Amice, ascende superius; Friend, sit up higher*: Not unlike a Scholar, who becoming a good proficient, is set up to a higher Class of deeper Learning. For he spent not all his days in Grammar, but studied to proceed from one Science to another, till he arrived to Perfection.

This Prayer of Affection is a familiar and passionate Treaty betwixt Christ and the Soul, wherein very little or no Discourse is used; or a sincere Communication with God, as present and resident within us; in which the Soul quitteth all reasonings
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and disputes, and by a simple direct contemplation, and thinking upon God, is carried on to him, and enflamed with the desires of praising, blessing, adoring and glorifying him, with several elevated acts of grace; oblation; petition, and above all, of Love, the Queen of other Vertues, most acceptable to, and most glorious in the sight of God, most advantageous to our selves, enabling us with power, to surmount all difficulties, to practice all good works, and uniting us more intimately to God.

This, I say, the Soul performs without discourse, in regard that the understanding being sufficiently furnished with light from her former meditations, hath no need to study new arguments or motives to produce love, and other necessary affections, but may serve herself of the former store.

The way to practise this, is first of all, to retire into the secret cabinet of our heart, applying our selves to God, who resideth there, not by reason and discourse, but by faith, stedfastly believing his Divine presence, with all his perfections? And in order to this firm assurance, to present our selves before him, with profound reverence and adoration, abasing our selves, out of respect to his infinite greatness, and the sense of our own vileness, in the light of those words of *David, Domine, quis similis tibi? Quid est homo quod memores ejus*; Lord who is Like unto thee? What is man that thou art mindful of him? or that he should dare to appear before the?

Keep your self before him with these affections of Reverence and Humility, and remain there for some considerable time, the better to imprint them upon your soul; for such time will be very well spent, and continue it yet longer, if you find your heart dilated and melted with these affections.

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After, this, shutting out all ruminating, and reflection upon the subject you desire to be employed upon (as for example, suppose it be this, that God is all in all, and your self are less than nothing, that he is your Sovereign Lord, and ultimate end; that he hath a particular care of every thing that concerns you, that our Saviour dyed for you, and the like) employ your self hereon by faith, in a most simple naked manner, reiterating acts of a lively faith, of such a truth, which the Church hath taught you; and after this, an act of Hope, or of Praise, or Thanksgiving, or Contrition for your sins; or of any other passion the Scitil shall be more disposed to; but especially of Love, taking care that these affections have an influence upon your will and manners, to produce in them a happy alteration.

These are the directions we are to observe in this second degree of Prayer, which therefore is called Prayer of Gods presence; and of Faith, and of Affection:

Wherewith also two things are carefully to be marked: First; that it is not requisite in this prayer, to exercise at the same time several passions; but rather one, as Hope, Love, or any other, well-grounded and prosecuted is sufficient: And the reason is plain, because so long as God gives to the soul; the grace to produce acts of any one virtue, in such a manner, as that she finds herself disposed and pressed thereto, and to exercise the same with ease, this is an evident token, that it is his will that she should serve and honour him, should sanctifie and perfect herself by the same; and that she ought to continue therein, so long as she finds that succour graciously assisting her. Moreover, on the Souls part; it would argue want
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of discretion, to quit so good and profitable an exercise, so powerfully supported in it, and it made so easie to her, by that Divine assistance; and fall upon another, that is likely to prove difficult, for want of the same assistance: Whence we may conclude, that we ought not to change our exercise of Piety, so long as God supplies us with sufficient grace to attend it.

The second is, that we should reiterate many acts of the same vertue; as of Faith, Hope, Love, or (which is better) continue and hold on the same act; thus, to acquire a rooting and establishment of these vertues, which is not gotten but by vigorous and effectual reiteration of their acts; as, a nail is not driven up to the head, with one blow, but must be stricken hard and often. And so it is with vertues, whose force and sound profit, consists in their having a well-rooted and grounded possession of the soul; whereas, they are worth little or nothing, till they are habituated therein; even as the Tree brings forth neither leaves nor fruits, until it hath taken deep rooting.

The same thing is to be done for any moral conclusions, which are drawn from these acts (that is) to double and redouble them, till they be fixed and made effectual; as for example, after some repeated acts of Faith, that God is your first Principle, and that of your self you are nothing, and that all your hope is in him, and our Saviour; say with your self, once, twice, and twenty times over, with affection, and a quiet, but vigorous application; If I believe this great truth of God and my self, why do I attribute any thing to my self? why do I not humble and abase my self under him? why do I not love him,
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upon whom all my good depends? why do I not look upon my self, and all creatures in the world, as nothing? If I hope in God, and my Saviour, why then do I fear any thing else? is not here ground enough to live with confidence and joy? what is he that can molest or trouble me? Live then, O my soul, in tranquility and repose, as this same hope doth oblige thee. These acts thus redoubled, and repeated with constancy and vigour, will without doubt produce great effects in the soul; which is the fruit that this Prayer of Affection should bring forth.

Herein did Monsieur Renty exercise himself for many years, reaping thereby an inestimable treasure of spiritual riches.

This Prayer (saith he in one of his Papers) is not by discourse and reasoning, but by a Loyal love, tending always to give more, than to receive. The obscurity of Faith is of greater evidence to the soul, than all the illuminations she can procure; which faith she ought to use with Reverence and Thanksgiving, not with Complacency or Affectation: Here needs no stretch of the Spirit, this Prayer never offends the brain; this is a state of modest deportment, in which the soul keeps herself in the presence of God; expecting what his spirit shall please to infuse into us, which we receive in simplicity, and in confidence, as if himself spake to us.

The ordinary dispositions with which he entred into this Prayer; were first, A profound Reverence, and an abasing of himself in Gods presence, whose infinite Majesty held him in a deep sense of his own meanness, saying, that we ought to consider our selves before it, as little, and less than the smallest Atomes. Secondly, A strong and absolute Confidence

in his Infinite Goodness and Mercy, which bearing up his Humility, and the sense he had of his own villainess, made him still hope all things.

He exhorted all of his acquaintance, that were capable of it, to use this kind of Prayer, as the most excellent, profitable, and easie of all others; since it puts not a man to the labor to consider, nor penetrate into, or discourse of any subject; but is easie for all sorts, but chiefly for the unlearned, who herein have need of no more, but a simple belief, applying themselves thereto with Affection.

He counselled men to give themselves more to the operations of the will, than the speculations of the understanding; and that place of *S. Paul* to *Titus*; where he exhorts us to live in sobriety, he expounded of the sobriety of the senses, and chiefly of that of the Spirit, to cut off in our prayers multiplicity of notions and discourse, and to proceed therein by Faith.

In effect, the mysterie of faith is incomparably transcendent above all the Science and Discourse of the most quaint and sublime wits; for as every thing is but visible by his own light, a Torch by his, and the Sun by the Sun; things of glory by the light of glory, so those of grace by the light of grace; whereof the most perfect, without doubt, is that of Faith. Reason is bestowed upon us for the discovery of natural things, and Faith for Supernatural and Divine: With men we discourse by Reason, and with God by Faith; and since God is at an infinite distance above man, and Grace above Nature, we may well conclude, that Humane discourse of the finest thred, is too heavy for that high pitch, which can soar no further than natural Reason can conduct it.

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Moreover;

Moreover, whatsoever notions we have in this World, of God, and things spiritual, they are in some degree deceitful and false, not representing things as they are really; since our Spirit conceives nothing here below, but what hath passed thorow the Senses, where spiritual things are refracted, and receive much Earth, and come to us distorted and disguised: But it is Faith alone that represents them in their real entities.

There are but two indubitable lights, on which we may rely, and which surpass all others in excellency, which sanctifie and deifie our understanding, elevating it to its first principle, and original of all verity; which is the Divine Intellect; that is to say, the light of Faith here, and the light of Glory hereafter. These two being participations of that knowledge which God himself hath, which demonstrates the dignity and perfection of Affective Prayer, which quitting Discourse, proceeds by Faith.

Neither did he make long stay upon the former way of Prayer, but passed on further, ascending to that of Union and Contemplation; which was bestowed upon him in a very high degree. Holy men speaking of this Contemplation, the sublimest degree of Prayer here upon Earth, make thereof two sorts, *Acquisite* and *Infused*: The latter is, that which God alone produceth in the Soul, to which she contributes nothing, but a simple consent, to receive his operation; which is also called contemplation *Passive*. The former is, that which man, assisted by Gods Grace, may acquire by his own labour, and exercise by his own industry, and is therefore called *Active*.

The *Infused* hath so absolute a dependence upon God, that it is given when, and to whom he pleaseth; who also takes it away, which we cannot hinder, no more than all the men in the World, with all their strength put together, can stay the Sun from rising and setting. But all are in some measure capable of the other; and it is a single Contemplation of God, or any other subject, without discourse, sweetly moving the will with holy Affections, and particularly with that of Love: It is a quiet, pleasant operation of the Soul, setting her in full view of her object; a silent prospect of Faith, accompanied with Reverence, Esteem, Gratitude, Confidence, and chiefly with Love.

When you visit a sick Friend, beholding him in bed, suffering extreamly, tossing and turning, tormented, and groaning; and this sight of such a loving Friend, toucheth you deeply with the sense of compassion, with an earnest desire to comfort him, and a sympathising in his Suffering, this is Contemplation; for you behold all this without reasoning, with one direct view, which affects you, and makes these impressions upon you. So when you behold our Saviour praying in the Garden, with his Face to the Earth, all over in a bloody sweat; or bound at the Pillar, covered with stripes; or nailed on the Cross, dying betwixt the extremities of pain and infamy; and this serious, but simple attention, without any formal discourse, affects you with compassion and admiration, with compunction for your sins, with hope and love: This is Contemplation. Again, when *Mary Magdalen* sits at our Saviours Feet, listening to his blessed words with the Ear of Faith; or looking up to Him upon the Cross, and believes this to be

the Son of God, her Redeemer, who pardoned her Sins, obliged her with so many favours, testified so great good will to her, and now suffereth so much for her; and when from this spring there flowes from her a torrent of tears, out of the Bowels of Love, Gratitude, and Contrition: This is Contemplation.

The use then of this Contemplation, Active and Acquisitè, consists in entring into the bottom of our Souls, and there in the presence of God quitting all Sense and Discourse, applying our Selves by Faith, and Affections of the Will, to some one of the Divine perfections, or some myserie of our Saviour, viewing it with Attention, and the Eyes of Faith, of Reverence, Affiance, and Love, without reasoning, and also without multiplying a quantity of different Affections at one time, fixing our selves upon this attentive and affectionate regard, which also ought to be so naked and abstracted from all solicitude and reflexion upon any thing else, as wholly to forget them as much as is possible; to betaken up wholly, and busied in listning to our Saviour, with *Mary Magdalene*, who sitting at his Feet, spake not one word, and though blamed by her Sister, answer'd nothing, thinking only upon hearing and attending on our Saviour.

The Soul in Contemplation must be silent to all creatures, and speak only with God. The Soul useth to speak to the Creatures four ways; by her Understanding, in thinking of them; by her Will in Affecting them; by her Imagination in forming Images of them; by her Passions in desiring them: and all this she doth without Language, or the help of her exteriour Senses.

So that the words she utters, are thoughts which she placeth upon them, and Affections which she conceiveth, and Idea's which she formeth, and desires which she produceth towards them.

On the contrary, the Soul is silent, and speaks not a word, when she ceaseth to apply herself to them by these faculties; and when she is not busied about them by those operations, but ceaseth from all acts that relate to them; insomuch, that having no commerce with them, she remains in such a state, as if there were nothing else in the World but God and she, to whom alone she speaketh in this mystical Silence, of which *St. John* is understood, when he speaks of a silence in Heaven, that is, in the Soul, when she converseth with God by her Understanding, and by her Will, producing acts of Faith, Hope, Love, Adoration, Blessing, Glorifying, Thanksgiving, Union, and the like.

And she is yet further silent, from time to time, neither speaking at all to him, no not after this noble way, and with this Divine Language, but is listning and attending to his Speeches, which sometime may be articulate, but these intelligible only to herself; but more frequently are illuminations, by which he enlightneth her understanding; and certain impressions and motions, with which he teacheth her will, saying with *David*, *audiam quid loquitur in me Dominus Deus*, I will hearken what the Lord speaketh within me: and praying with *Samuel*, *Loquere Domine, quia audit servus tuus*; Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.

Our Saviour teaching his Disciples to Pray, told them, and us in their Persons, *Orantes, nolite, multum loqui*; When you Pray, use not many words; which

he meant not only of the words of the mouth, but likewise of understanding, and other faculties; Speak not much, but hearken diligently: He likewise calls himself *Verbum*, the Word, because he must be listened unto, and that deservedly; wherefore he saith to the soul, *Audi Filia; Hearken, O my Daughter.*

And Father *Avila*, who hath writ an excellent Treatise upon those words, gives this for a weighty advice, that we should go to prayer, to hear rather than to speak; who also told *Lewis of Granada*, that writ his Life, how that when he went to his holy Exercise, he used to bind and tye up his understanding, like a fool, to the end that it might not talk much. We have certain souls, which in their prayers, talk all, as conceiving, that the mysterie consists in talking much to God, and employing still their faculties in working, without considering, that what God shall speak to them, will be far better and more profitable than what they can speak to him; even, as in our converse with other men, we use not to talk continually, but after a few words, hearken to what they speak: So in our prayers to our Saviour, let us after our speaking to him attend with silence to what he shall say to us. This is the course of active Contemplation, and prayer of Union; where we must mark its difference from prayer of Discourse, and prayer of Affection, in that these two faculties of the soul, the understanding and will acting all these three sorts of prayer: The Understanding acts more than the Will in prayer of Discourse; the Will more in prayer of Affection (where is to be noted, that those who begin this prayer are not in the entrance thereof, ordinarily, without some discourse; but yet such as go on, di-

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minishing by little and little, till at last it quite ceaseth; and note also, that in the beginning, they have great variety of affectionate acts, but toward the end but few. In the prayer of Contemplation or Union, the Will hath the mastery over the Understanding; but with more simplicity than in the prayer of Affection: Besides, in this God acts more, and man less; therefore the operation here is more spiritual, more pure, and divine, therefore he ought to attend in peace and affiance the action of God, without disturbing it.

Whereupon Monsieur Renty used to say,

That it was the great imperfection of many souls, not to attend sufficiently to God; the natural faculties being too busie, and not subjecting themselves to him, upon specious pretences, thinking to do wonders; whereby indeed they hinder him from working in the soul, whilst he findes it in a state of agitation and inquietude; whereas it should be in tranquility and silence, to receive his operations.

But some may say to me, that he conceives this cutting off Discourse, and this using of a naked Faith, and so great simplicity of operation, can do little, but rather loseth time. To whom I reply, that it is quite the contrary and time very well spent; for whilst we quit the operations of sense and discourse, we dismiss that which keep us at a distance from God, who is infinitely above all discourse, and much more above sense; but going on by faith, and the affections of the will, we approach near to him.

Monsieur Renty cleareth this doubt in one of his papers, saying;

Some will say, often there occurs nothing to me in such prayers, and I fear to spend my time in idleness; But know, that you lose no time at all, when by losing your self, you are found

found in a state of Reverence and Affiance in the presence of God, to make your course towards him; nor can he dislike such a behaviour. Another will say, but I have had many distractions, and find my self afflicted with great aridities, and many other inconveniences. I answer, persevere still, notwithstanding all these difficulties, in your view, of Faith and Reverence, and in your Affections, as much as you can, and keep your self shut up in the cabinet of your heart: Suffer the noise of all these tempests without, without heeding them; after the example of Noah, who in the midst of his Ark, was quiet, as his very name imports, whilst winds and waves beat upon him on every side. These things are but necessary and serve to purge and dispose the soul for the operation of God upon it; even as green wood puffs and sweats out its humidity, before it can burn. So, let these distractions, and all sorts of imaginations assault us, as it pleaseth God, but let them not trouble or hinder us from this holy exercise, only let us, diverting our minds from these miseries, when we perceive any, continue peaceably, and without noise, this our Sacrifice, with assurance that we shall not wait long before our Lord come unto us.

And himself, when finding himself in such sterile condition, would cry to God out aloud, when he was alone, I am yours, O my God, in despite of all these distractions and aridities: I am yours, and will continue so without reserve; you have created me, and I will love you for ever.

Sometime he would write with his finger upon the ground, and sometimes upon his breast; saying,

I am content with every thing that proceeds from the will of God, and with what he appoints for me: I ask nothing else, I will never trouble my self to procure consolation, or to be freed from aridities, my resolution is to bless God at all times.

To this purpose he writ to his Director :

I am now and then an hour or two at prayer, and nothing occurs to me : Sometime I am troubled with distractions, aridities, and lassitude ; but however it comes to pass, I never end, but with a desire to begin again, and often this lassitude of body is relieved, and vanisheth by an inward strength, which is given me, and which disposeth me to continue my Devotion out of the time and place of prayer, even in the midst of converse and business ; and I tell you sincerely, that notwithstanding I perform every thing so ill, yet I find little difference of times for prayer, being recollected continually.

To another intimate friend he writ thus :

I was the other day three or four hours in the Church with great aridities, nothing occurring whereon to fix my self : Behind me I over-heard a good servant of God saying his prayers with the Gloria Patri : I presently offered up to God that which I heard him say ; whereupon of a sudden, it was discovered to me, that when the soul is alone in the desert, where she hath no creature to rest upon, God casteth down from heaven his line of love, to draw her up towards him ; and something to that effect I felt in my self ; and though nothing did occur to me, yet when I end prayer, I could willingly begin it afresh.

And thus much for active and acquiste Contemplation.

As for the passive and infused, as it depends absolutely on God, so hath it no other rule but his will and good pleasure, to communicate himself to a soul, illuminating the understanding with transcendent light, and replenishing the will with strong affections, especially that of love : Even as *Moses,*
that

that perfect pattern of all Contemplation, to make himself fit to ascend Mount *Sinai*, there to converse with God, quitted his herds and flocks, his People both great and small, his Brother *Aaron*, and even *Joshua* his Servant, who was continually with him, and then went up alone to the point of the Hill, where *he entred into the dark cloud, in which God was*, as the Scripture saith, and abode there forty days in Contemplation, and intimate converse with his Sacred Majesty; So must we quit sense, reasonings, all sensible and intellectual things, to be admitted into true Contemplation, which is transacted within the Clouds of Faith (where certainly God is) and by Faith in our illuminations and affections. And here is to be noted, that all these sublime Contemplations and Favours, must terminate in a ready disposition of the Soul, to the Will of God, to render it carefully observant of his Commandments; even as all those of *Moses* were, for the receiving of the Tables of the Law, and the putting them into his hand; which yet were afterwards broken, to teach us by a figure, that the Soul, notwithstanding all those dispositions and helps to sanctity, is subject to failings, so feeble and near to precipice are we, with all these illuminations, unless God sustain us.

The Spouse in the *Canticles*, inviteth Souls in these amorous words, *Comedite amici, & bibite, & inebriamini charissimi*; Eat and drink my Friends, and be inebriated, you that are dearest to me: Where by Eating, which breaketh and cheweth the Food, is meant Meditation; by Drinking, which swalloweth liquid things, Prayer of Affection; and by Drunkenness, Active Contemplation, or rather Passive; which produceth the same effect in the Soul, as Drunkenness doth in the Body,

Body, viz. loss of reason, oblivion of all things, and mirth.

Monsieur Renty was drawn up thither by God, and elevated with *Moses*, to the top of the Mountain of infused contemplation. Thus he writ to his Director in the year, 1645.

I have not had this long time any use, neither at prayer, nor almost at other times, of the understanding, nor of memory; I neither see, nor feel any thing, have neither gust nor disgust of any thing, only find my will lively, and ready for every thing, that shall be shewed it by God, and for God.

In another Letter to him thus:

I find for some time, that my prayer is no more regular; I possess the Sacred Trinity with a plenitude of verity, and clearness, and this with such an attraction so pure and so vigorous in the superiour part of my soul, that my outward employment creates me no diversion at all.

And another time he writ thus:

Jesus Christ worketh the experience of his Kingdom in my heart, and I find him there my Lord and my master, and my self wholly his: I discover now a greater enlarging of my heart, but so simple, that I am not able to express it; save onely thus, that it is a simple, but most real sight of the Trinity, accompanied with praising, blessing, and offering up all homage thereto: All which is done so silently, that it causeth no noise below, neither can it be discerned in the higher part of my soul by parcels, so as to be expressed, except it be by reflection: Whether I utter myself well to you, or no, I know not.

This blessed man, thus united by contemplation to God, the supream verity, received abundant light, both for himself and others, upon all subjects; but especially those he had for the understanding of

of the holy Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, and therein the mysteries of our Saviour were admirable.

Thus in a Letter to his Director :

Upon one word I shall read in the New Testament, I shall sometimes discover notions of those truths, in so full and piercing a manner, that I even feel my body replenished therewith, that is, my whole nature penetrated.

And to one of his friends thus :

When I read the Sacred Scripture, I fortifie my self to enter into those effects they work, which is a plenitude of the truth of God; wherewith the soul is solidly and experimentally satisfied.

And he made notes upon all the *Lent*-Gospels; full of piety, and those great illuminations, with which his spirit was replenished.

This in a short account of the Prayer of this great servant of God, so far as we could discover it; for the chief part thereof, is that which passed within the Sanctuary of his own Soul, where his union and converse with God was so wonderful, that after he had spent seven or eight hours therein, he found himself in the end, as if he had onely then begun it, except onely that he had then yet more desire to continue it; and at length arrived to that height, that he never ended it at all, being wholly and constantly in recollection and application to God : Whereupon he professed to an intimate friend, that he need neither particular place, nor time for prayer, since in all places, times and business; he continued it.

CHAP. IX.

The state of his Mystical Death and Annihilation.

WE are now come to the highest degree of Vertue, and the ultimate disposition of the soul to render her capable of a most intimate union with God wherein her perfection consists: She must dye first before she can live this new life, and must be annihilated, to become truly something.

This death and annihilation stands not, in the destruction of mans naturals, to deprive him of understanding, memory, will, and affections, much less of his senses; but in the ruine of the old man, which is wholly corrupt, and infected with sin; in such sort, that the understanding and other faculties spiritual and corporal be cleansed, and animated by the Spirit of Christ Jesus, to work no more according to nature corrupted, nor yet nature pure, but nature elevated by grace, and sanctified by Jesus Christ.

Now as the corruption and malignity of the old man, holds an entire possession of our nature, and the poyson of sin is spread all over body and soul, so that from the crown of the head, to the soal of the foot (as saith the Prophet) there is no sound part in us: So all these parts must be healed, this corruption purged out, and the malignity perfectly mortified
and

mortified and destroyed. When I say perfectly, I mean, so much as this can be done here on Earth; for it is only in Heaven, in the estate of Glory, where this Happiness is compleatly perfected; but in this World, there will still remain something to be purged. This holy man, writing to one concerning this state of death and annihilation, tells him, how that singing in the Church, with others, the *Magnificat*, he was illuminated upon these words, *Deposuit potentes de sede, &c.* He hath put down the mighty from their Seat, and hath exalted the humble; which represented to him a Soul full of it self, compleat in the power and riches of its Parts and natural endowments, in its Life of exterior and interior sense, undertaking to see and understand every thing, full of it self, and quite empty of God.

Then he addes:

Now our Saviour gave me to understand in this verse, that he divesteth this soul of her own proper arrogant spirit, rich in nothing but iniquity, that he humbles, and empties, and annihilates her, and so exalteth the lowly; advancing her at length to a wonderful condition; where I saw her reduced in an happy and rich annihilation, emptied of herself, and despoiled of what she possessed, of sense and man; divested not only of the old man; but of the gifts of God that are in her, to be presented before him in nakedness, and simple obedience, I understood, that in this estate, the soul being affected with great humility and affiance; likewise, God did in her, that which he pleased, and that she was thoroughly enlightened, and that she discovered afar off the least things, as we usually do a little bush in the midst of a mown field.

He writ this following Letter to his Director upon the same subject.

Since

Since the time that I gave up my liberty to God, signed with my blood, as I told you : I was given to understand, to what a state of annihilation the soul must be brought, to render it capable of union with him : I saw my soul reduced into a small point, contracted and shrunk up to nothing : And at the same time, I beheld my self, as if encompassed with whatsoever the world loves and possesseth, and as it were, a band remaining all this far from me, throwing it into the Ocean of Annihilation. In the first place I saw removed all Exterior things, Kingdoms, great Offices, stately Buildings, rich Household stuff, Gold and Silver, Recreations, Pleasures ; all which are great encombrances to the souls passing on to God, of which therefore his pleasure is that she be stripped, that she may arrive at the point of nakedness and death which will bring her into possession of solid riches, and real life. Secondly, all Interior things, which are more delicate and precious ; as, Acquired Sciences, skill and Sublime Learning, operations of the Memory and strength of Understanding, humane Reason, experience of Sense ; of which the Soul must likewise be purged, and dye to its own proper actions. And I perceived, that we must come like little Infants, simple and Innocent, separated, not only from evil, but even from our ordinary way and manner of doing that which is good, undertaking what the Divine Providence presents to us, by making our way by God to them, and not by them to God ; which is a course more naked, unengaged, and abstracted ; which sees nothing but God : And not so much, if I may so say, as the things, she doth, of which nothing stays in her, neither choice, nor joy, nor sorrow for their greatness, or for their littleness, for good or bad success, but only the good pleasure and order of God, which ruleth in all things, and which in all things sufficiently contenteth the soul which adheres to him, and not to the vicissitude of affairs whereupon she is constantly even, equal, and always the same in the midst of all changes:

In another he writ thus to the same purpose :

An absolute abnegation, will be necessary to all things, to follow in simplicity, without reserve, or reflection, what our Saviour shall work in us, or appoint for us ; let it be this or that : This way was shewed me, in which I ought to walk towards him ; and hence it is that all things to me, ordinarily, are without any gust or delight.

Moreover, in another thus :

I apprehend great matters concerning the verity and simplicity of the annihilation I ought to have ; and I had for the twinkling of an Eye, the sight how simple this should be, that the Soul it self cannot take notice of it : This is the state of Death and Annihilation, without regard to any thing I have our being wholly to God, by Sequestration, Faith and Affiance.

Lastly, to another :

Assure your self there is no security in any estate but this, of Dying and Annihilation ; which is, to be baptized into Christ's Death, that we may live the life of Mortification, not that other ways may not be good, but not secure ; especially any thing we do of our selves : Our best way is therefore to divest our selves of all, that the Holy Infant Jesus govern all.

He used the word *All*, because this death must be universal, thorow every part of Old Adam ; even as a dead Body, is not only dead in an Eye, or Ear, or Hand, but in every Sense and Member, so must we dye to Riches and Poverty, to Pleasure and Pain, Honour and Dishonour, Praise and Dispraise, being affected with none of these, because we are dead to all : Moreover, the Spirit must be dead, not only to one faculty, as the Understanding or Will, but to all, and to every thing ; only the difference is this, that the Body being once deprived of her
Life,

Life, cannot naturally recover it again; but the Spirit will easily live again, and the malignity of the Old *Adam* return upon us, if great heed be not taken; because we are not able by this Death, to reach the very centre of Nature.

Just as in your Garden, you may either suffer a noysom weed to grow, if you meddle not with it, but give it liberty to spread its leaves and encrease; or if you would not have it appear, you may cut it, or pluck it up by the roots; but after all is done, you cannot prevent that the Earth shall not produce the like, if it be thereto disposed naturally; Even so it is in your power to permit unruly Affections to live in your Soul, producing therein disorders, and exercising their tyranny; or you may mortifie them so, that they get not head, although the root remains: or further, may root them up, as heroick Spirits do, changing their nature, and turning the course thereof, introducing contrary inclinations, from Evil to Good, from Vice to Vertue: yet although these generous Spirits arrive to this height, yet will their nature continue still rotten at bottom, ready to bear the same cursed weeds, without our daily vigilancy.

§. I. *Of the same subject.*

TO decypher particularly the mystical death of this renowned person; we may aver, That in the first place he was dead to riches, and all the wealth of this world; in which he so absolutely divested himself both of any affection to them in his heart, and of the real possession of them, that he quitted, as we have formerly mentioned, all property to them, using them no otherwise, than in the quality of a very poor man, with an ardent desire that he might also be deprived of the very use of them.

‘I acknowledge before God (*saieth he, in a Letter to his Director*) his great mercy to me, through his Son in freeing me from the things of this world: and my constant thoughts are, that if his order did not oblige me otherwise in that condition he hath set me, to give away and quit all I have: This is my earnest desire, after which I long exceedingly; not out of presumption of my own strength, but in the power of Jesus Christ, in imitation of his life.

And to another person he writ:

‘All that can be imagined in this lower world, is of small concernment, though it were the losing of all our goods, and the death of all the men in it: This poor Ant-hill, is not worthy of a serious thought, had we but a little faith, and a little love, how happy should we esteem our selves, in giving away all, to attend no more save on God alone; and to say, *Deus meus & omnia; my God and my all.*

In

In his suit or Law at *Dijon*, he acted with so little shew of interest, and so like a mortified man to gain or loss, that he could not be perswaded not onely to sollicite the Judges, but not so much as to commend his case to them himself; not out of any faulty supine indifferency, or neglecting what he thought absolutely necessary; but because by an heroick vertue, he had lost the sense of all these earthly things, entirely committing the success thereof to God; and knowing that these things succeed better by our prayers to, and affiance in him, than with our addresses to men, through the multitude of solicitings, many times fruitless.

Secondly, he was dead and crucified to all recreations and pleasures of this life; having renounced them at the beginning of his Conversion, remaining constantly in the condition of a sacrifice of body and soul to God, which was his great exercise, and his usual phrase; making no further use of his senses, and their objects, than what was of absolute necessity, following herein the pattern of our Saviour: He was so wholly taken up with God (as we have said before) in his soul, that when he had very grievous pains in his body, and was very sick, he scarce thought upon them, but accounted it a trouble to speak or complain thereof, as appeared notably in his last sickness.

Thirdly, he was annihilated and dead to honour, his great birth and nobility, where from he solemnly degraded himself in the arms of our Saviour, to render himself the more humble.

He was dead also to all esteem and praise of men, and to disgrace likewise; of which he gave a notable testimony to a familiar friend, who told him

how much she was troubled, to see him so much honoured and esteemed by men: Who answered her:

First, That she had great reason for it, in that he so little deserved it. And secondly, upon her demand, how those commendations affected him: He replied, I neither attend, nor return any answer to them: they affect me no more than a stock, through the grace of God, I am insensible of praise and dispraise; the one, nor the other make not any impression upon my spirit, but I entertain 'em without reflexion.

And he had good reason, since as all the prayers men bestow upon us, make us not one jot the better, so neither their opprobries the worse: Besides that, ordinarily in the distribution of these, the greatest piece of injustice in the world is committed, by commending such as least deserve it, but rather shame and confusion, and blaming such, whom God highly esteemeth.

In the fourth place, he was dead and crucified to all supernatural good things, all spiritual delights and favours (which without comparison are of greatest value, above all that we have named) even to all gifts, vertues, perfections, which he desired and sought after with a most disengaged and self denying spirit, not lusting after this or that vertue, this or that degree of perfection, but willing and desiring all, according to Gods will, about which he expressed himself further thus;

The love of our selves is so afraid to be stripped out of any thing, that it suffers us not to be carried forth to our true rest, as long as it can subsist and uphold it self by its own right and property; which should teach us, to use all diligence for the annihilation of our own desires, even of those that seem to us to tend onely to vertue: I say that seem to us, whereas indeed if God gave us a true light, we should undoubtedly

see,

see, that the course which tends to our divesting of all these things, carries us on secretly, but most really, to the true possession of them, and our own preservation; and that we must daily descend to our own nothingness, in which alone God is to be found. *There happy are all such poor in spirit.*

He was also dead and annihilated to all gusts of Devotion, all sensible Graces and Consolations, of which our love-sick souls are so greedy: Upon which subject he expressed himself thus:

'I am better satisfied with those graces in which sense hath no part, then with those that have more of the sensible; of which indeed, I am somewhat jealous, for we find amongst spiritual persons, great store of counterfeit riches of the Spirit; those, I mean, who are all for gusts, and sensible consolations, and illuminations, in this state of exile; wherein we ought to live rather by faith, than feeling, and which is much to be lamented, We meet very few that are not infected with this itch, it being the natural condition of man, to desire to see, and to that end to affect and search for enlightenings, and wanting the experimental knowledge of that which comes from God, which is not to be gotten but by quitting his own, he looks after that which he finds in himself, mistaking it for Divine, because it is modeliz'd to his own gust and fancy.

And in another Letter thus:

As for obscurities, aridities, and other troubles of spirit, they are to be born with upon any terms; and we must give up ourselves as forlorn creatures, throwing our selves unto God, on all sides of us, as a fish in the Ocean, which is its proper element; into God, at all times, and for all things: If we be true members of our Saviour Christ Jesus, we shall see nothing but submissions and abnegations, and shall sense nothing else but these.

He was dead and annihilated also to all glorious and extraordinary favours and enjoyments; of which he had no other feeling, than the Sun, which being covered over with light, and crowned with glory, yet is no way sensible thereof; insomuch, that having received by the mouth of a great Saint, promises of some great favours from God, he returned this answer to his Director:

These things whereof they have given me notice and assurance, must be as they may, I rest nothing upon them, nor confide in them, knowing it to be my duty to live by faith.

Being certified at another time, of a special favour received from our Saviour, it had no other operation upon him, but the impressiion of a great confusion, and profound humility; And as they gave him all these things in writing at large, he parted with them all to his Director, together with all his other secrets, and most important papers of Devotion; especially those written with his own blood, formerly mentioned; an evident demonstration of his great humility, by reason that most men are taken with those parcels of piety, grounding this their affection to them, upon some benefit receivable by them: But the reliance which is placed upon God, must be disengaged from every thing else. This he made appear by this Letter to his Director:

I have received the paper, which mentioned this grace and favour, whereof I send you the copy, having no other reflection thereupon, but to meet it with the greatest latitude of heart I can possible, to bless God, acknowledge his goodness, and serve him for it, I have burnt the original, with several other papers of the like nature. If you judge it not convenient that I should do so, let me receive your commands accordingly

accordingly for the future, I could wish if there be any thing left for me to wish) that I had nothing left me but my God: This is the sure replenishment of the soul, and rich treasure of the heart.

Moreover, he was wholly dead to all that God wrought by him, taking no share thereof, nor interesting himself any more with them after they were done, than if they had been performed by another.

Fifthly, he was crucified and dead to all affections, not onely such as are irregular, but those also which are purely natural of all creatures; and in particular, of those who used his counsel, and depended upon him for the conduct of their souls, wherein the obligations and relations on both parts, use to be more than ordinary; inso-much, that upon a seperation, there falls out dejection of spirit, and distractions of Devotion. To this purpose he writ to one of those persons, thus:

I cannot, without much trouble, bear the great matter you make of my converse, and of my removes: Let us be at it after God and make good our alliance with Jesus Christ to learn in, and from him, a profound abnegation of our selves.

And in another Letter thus:

Jesus Christ is ever the same, and his grace is continually advancing, and as long as I am to him, so long shall I be to you, for him, and in him; he is not wont to part souls, by the seperation of bodies; since his vision is, to separate onely what is imperfect, as being that which very often brings with it some hinderances to the perfect life of the spirit, which is never so compleat, as when it is alone.

Giving

Giving notice to a friend, of the death of the Countess of *Cahres*, for whose spiritual good and perfection, he had taken very much pains; He writeth thus:

‘I was not at *Paris* nor at *City*, when she departed, ‘I was sent for post the day of her death, which was ‘*Saturday*, but came two hours to late. Entering the ‘Town, I understood the news from them, that ‘spake openly of it in the streets: Presently I fixed ‘my self to the will of God, whereupon I found no ‘more alteration in my soul, than if she had been ‘alive: I see his order in this, that I assisted her not ‘at her death, and make no doubt, but that he permitted it for her advantage.

To a friend that had lost his spiritual Director, he writ thus:

Touching the remove of your Ghostly Father, it would, without question, prove a great loss to you, and all the Country from whence he went, if the providence of God herein did not rather sanctifie and establish, than destroy; and if oftentimes by removing these petty visible and sensible supports, he did not make way to settle us more firmly in our progress to which he designs us; which is, to dwell and to hold our selves in God, together with Christ Jesus; where we find all truth, and all power, and who is so near to us, that he is even in the midst of us; and proportionably as our dependence upon creatures faileth, through his providence, he makes it appear and we experimentally find, that we are not less destitute thereby, but that supply, is made either by his Spirit, that resideth continually in us, for our relief; or by the conduct of his ministers, which the fewer they are, the more is that grace dilated and multiplied, which we receive by them. So great is the providence of our Heavenly Father, as to take care of the meanest necessities of all his children; who to him

him behave themselves as children. Neither indeed ought we to be further engaged to those persons who assist us in our Spiritual conduct than as to Gods instruments, whose help, if it be his will we should make use of, but no longer than be pleas'd; and when his will is either by death, or otherwise to take them from us, we ought not to be afflicted, nor lose our courage; but with submission and gratitude, resign all to him which will be a good means to move him to provide others, who perhaps with more advantage to us, may understand the pulse of our souls.

In time, he was dead to all love of himself; which he had so perfectly subdued, that being naturally quick and hasty (as we have formerly hinted) he became so staid and equal in all his demeanor, as caus'd admiration in those that knew him; being naturally of a high spirit, he had acquired a most profound humility of heart, whereof he produc'd most evident actions exteriourly, at all times, and in all places: And though his genius inclin'd him to wit and scoffing, yet he so correct'd it, that none was more respectful and courteous to all, even the meanest: As for his passions, those were so perfectly subdued and regulated, that they never brok loose upon any occasion; so that you might say, he had none at all.

He had arriv'd to a perfect death in the superiour faculties of his soul, his memory so emptied of all worldly things, that it never presented any Idea's sufficient to distract his Devotions: He made not any imperfection upon what was past; as we have observ'd, and our Saviour had endow'd him with this singular grace, not to be busied in his thoughts, about those actions, in which he was conversant; which after they were done, were obliterated wholly as to any care for them, and quite blotted out

out of his memory that they might be no hinderance to what was in hand.

This Letter was writ to a familiar friend, relating hereunto.

It is some while ago, that finding my self in the midst of a world of people, my spirit was inlightened and affected neither to desire to know any body, nor to be known to any; This bath wrought in me a wonderful separation from every thing; and methinks, herein consisteth one of the chiefest points of a Spiritual Life, which requires great purity of spirit; wonderful estrangement and distance from the creature; and which placeth the soul in this world (as if it were no part of it) in a state of perfect oblivion and ignorance of things which do not concern her, that is no longer able to endure, but onely what is necessary.

He was dead to his spirit, reason, and judgment, living onely the life of Faith, which is a Christians proper death. It may be gathered from what hath been mentioned already, that he acted nothing by th's faculty of its self, no more than if he had had no such power, but wrought all by the moving of Christ Jesus, who lived in him, and operated by him.

Lastly, he was annihilated and dead to his own will; which we have placed after all, as being the most important faculty in relation to Mortal actions: This therefore he had intirely resigned, in conformity to Gods will, not desiring absolutely any thing but in order thereto.

I adore (saith he, in one of his Letters) so affectionately the will of God, in whatsoever he pleaseth to mark out for me, that Hell it self should be my Paradise, if he decreed me thither.

And in another, thus :

Far be it from me, to act in this business by my own spirit; I would have it wholly annihilated, that it might know no other language but Nothing, and continually Nothing, to follow in all the footsteps of the Divine will, according to its measure and manner.

And to a third, thus :

My Saviour hath graciously brought me into such a state of indifferency for every thing, that I could be very well content all my life, to be fixed to my bed, a Paralytique, not able to stir, without making any reflection upon any service I might render to my Neighbour, or that I could render him no more ; all things, according to the will of God, being equal to me.

In a fourth, thus :

Of late I have been busied in such occasions, both Externally, and Internally, as were sufficient to have gravel'd such a weak mean spirit as mine, had it not been absolutely resigned to the will of God, It is upon him alone, by this way of Abnegation, that I bottom my self, adoring with you, and by your instruction, the decrees of his Sacred and Devine Will, who holdeth all things in his own hands to keep us subject unto him by his justice, and to sanctifie us also by love : If the effects thereof upon us do evidence us to have the hearts of children (that is) the Spirit of Christ Jesus, to sigh after our heavenly Father, and cry, Abba Pater.

§ 2. *Continuation of the same subject.*

Monsieur Remy was so absolutely resigned to God, having quite lost and annihilated his own will into that of God, that he neither desired nor feared any thing in this World. And in fine, enjoyed such a sweet tranquility of spirit and repose, which nothing could disturb or alter, that from thence arose a wonderful and invariable equality, shining forth in his Exterior at all times, in all places, upon all occasions.

One of his intimate friends, desirous to try one day whether he had an affection to anything, question'd with him about every thing he could think of, to put him to the test: and among other things, asked him whether he desired not that these works which he had undertaken for the glory of God, might succeed and take effect. To whom he replied, that he had no other aim in all his actions and enterprises, than the accomplishing of the will of God: and that although he used his utmost endeavour that such things might succeed, yet notwithstanding, he was perfectly resigned in all things to his Majesties good pleasure: adding many other expressions, testifying his Mortification to all desires, and a perfect transformation of his will into that of God's. This discourse was not quite finished, but there hapned an occasion to put it to the tryal, for one came running in, crying that all the Heaven was on fire: which new, usually very frightful, made no alteration in him at all, who most calmly and composedly looking up to the
Heavens,

Heavens, said the Fire is here in *Paris*, without any further distance, though he understood presently that it was so violent, that the street he lived in, was in danger to be burnt down, and his Neighbours said, it was necessary to quite forsake their quarters, by reason that the fire was not far off, and was likely in a very short space to reach them. In this publick fright, he keeping his ordinary equality, and referring all to the will of God, went into his Chappel, where he continued long time in prayer, offering up himself in Sacrifice to God, and resigning up his own will unto him; some persons looking upon him with great admiration in this posture; whilst so many hundreds were at their wits end, and preparing for a speedy flight.

He professed to another secret and familiar friend; that he felt himself, through the mercy of God, in such an absolute state of death to every thing, that neither Angels, nor Men, the loss of all he had, the subversion of his Family, nor any other accident could remove him from his settled tranquility: And this he said, not hyperbolically, or by way of ostentation, but out of a solid experimental establishment in that fortitude, common with him to all great Saints.

Such was the mystical death and annihilation of this man of God, by which his soul was enriched with a vast treasure of spiritual wealth, causing him to lead a most perfect life, and uniting him most intimately to God, to which this death is absolutely necessary; because no being can arrive to that which it was not formerly, without ceasing first to be what it was; as, wood cannot pass into the nature of fire, as long as it keeps its former nature;

nature; this must be quitted, and the matter be divested of all the form of wood, both in substance and accidents, and reduced into a state of privation, to be made capable of the fires unitement to it. And this is a general rule in nature, admitting no exception that each subject must be predisposed to receive a new form, and so much more, as this form is more noble; and this disposition consists in the privation, of the subject, and loss of other forms, to gain a new one: So also to make a spiritual man, he must no more live according to nature, but that he may be capable to be united to God, must necessarily dye and be annihilated to himself.

And if fire require this total privation in the matter, to communicate it self thereto; with greater reason doth God, who is altogether a spirit infinitely pure, the first and sovereign entity, require of a man this universal nakedness and privation, this death, an annihilation to himself, and all created beings, before he give and unite himself with him; for in giving himself, he giveth also the fruition of himself, of his beauty, goodness, wisdom, and his other perfections, and by this union renders the receiver happy.

Hence also may be gathered, what admirable purity is requisite in a soul, for this union with God in Heaven, in the state of glory; that for this we must either conceive our Baptismal Innocence; or if that hath been lost or sullied, we must be purged here, or in Purgatory, by severe penances, notwithstanding our other good works, and the high degrees of Sanctity to which we have attained.

And

And the same in proportion, may be averred of the soul here in this estate of grace, where it must be very pure, to prepare it well for its union with God here in this life: And seeing her pollution ariseth from her love to the creature, and to herself, and from the life of the first *Adam*, according to the lusts and appetites of our own spirit, it must dye to all these creatures, and likewise to its self; just as the body to be made perfect, and to partake the true life of immortality and bliss, must necessarily dye first; so likewise must our souls, if we will have them arrive to perfection, consisting in this union with God, to lead a holy and Divine life, which alone can truly be called life.

To this purpose he writ thus to his Director!

I see clearly, that the only way to a Divine Union, is to be perfectly divested of every thing that is not God, and dead to our selves, and every creature: O that I well understood the importance of this nakedness and death! and what is it that hinders the bonds of this Celestial love and union with his Divine majesty, and that Sovereign Beauty, but a certain shew of, and light adherence to some creature? and shall we suffer that a thing so small, and so unworthy, should possess in the room of God, and that Holy Spirit, which is an all-consuming fire of love, environing us on all sides, should not have the power to work upon us the same effect, which this elementary fire worketh upon wood? Why should not I a vicious and discontented creature, in the midst of these my wretched plagues, acquire happiness in the possession of God, which I may do by his grace, in separating my self gently from the creature, by a single and affectionate application to the Creator

To another person he writ, thus:

When S. Paul saith, You are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ Jesus: He layeth death as the necessary foundation of a Christian, whereby to remove from him all affection and inclination to the creature: As we see; that a dead man hath no more any motion or sense of anything; for though we are frequently sensible of the rebellious motions of corrupted nature, yet they only spring to be choaked and stifled in their birth. To this purpose the Apostle sets our Saviour for our pattern; of whom he said in the former part, Exinanivi: seipsum; He emptied himself. If you ask how long, and to what degree, I answer, even from the instant of his conception, to his death: Behold this is our Rule, our Patern, and our general Rendezvous from all sides.

And to a third:

*'If we understood truly, how the real divesting
'our selves of all, rendered us capable of union with
'God, we would incessantly beg this grace, offering
'great violence to our selves, to arrive at this state
'of Death and Abnegation, to which every Christi-
'an must endeavour, that aims at union with
'God, and ascends to perfection. I received some
'years since, great illumination upon this verity,
'giving me to understand, that the treasure hidden
'in the field, mentioned in the Gospel, is no other
'but this estate of Death and Annihilation, taking
'away from us our selves, to give us to God;
'emptying us of all creatures, to be replenished
'with the Creator, the Fountain of all good. Our
'Saviour tells us there, that he that found it, went
'and sold all to buy it: If we understood the true
'value of this precious treasure, we would freely
'part with our liberty, with all we are, and all
'we have, to purchase it.*

Really;

‘Really, this should work in us great confusion, that such precious things, and such forcible motives, obliging us to tend to this Abnegation, we arrive at it so slowly, and most men so seldom. O how few truly annihilated persons are to be found ! few that do not live according to the corrupted life of the old man, producing actions accordingly, when ever occasions of honour, or profit, or pleasure are presented : Few that attain to lose and renounce themselves in such points as tend to their perfection : Let us therefore employ all our forces to arrive at this happy estate.

O the spirits that are thus dead, what an admirable life do they live ! and hereby become rare instruments in the hands of God ; capable to act great matters tending to his glory : These are intimately united to him, wholly transformed and annihilated in God ; and by this gainful loss, and happy annihilation, arrive at the height of perfection, they enjoy a settled peace, a pure and solid contentment incomparably surpassing all sensual pleasures. These are so far advanced above all earthly greatness, above that Idol Honour, which the world so much admireth, that these are become their contempt and scorn. They make no difference betwixt the pomps of Emperours and Spiders-webs ; they value Diamonds and Precious Stones, equal with common Pibbles ; they neither take health for happiness, nor sickness for misery ; they think that poverty should not be termed a misfortune, nor poor men be deemed miserable ; they weigh not Beatitude in silver scales, nor measure it by the Ell of Pleasure ; but repute that all these things do much resemble running waters, which in their course wash the roots of trees and plants as they pass, but make no stay with any of them, flowing continually towards the end and place appointed them.

Of these illustrious dead men, and most divinely annihilated souls, the Angel speaks in the Apocalypse, *Write, blessed are they that dye in the Lord from henceforward, for they rest from their labours.* And indeed this verity should be writ in Letters of Gold, in Characters of Saphyrs and Rubies. Blessed are the dead who dye thus to themselves, and to all created things, to live only to their Redeemer: The Holy Ghost hath said it, and assured them, that at the instant of this precious death, they find rest from all their labours, because their former pains and troubles of spirit now have an end, for that they have now rooted out the causes of them, and dried up the fountain, which according to S. *James*, are our lusts and concupiscences.

Monfieur *de Renty* had arrived to this pitch, as may be seen in what we have mentioned, deserving to be put in the list of those truly happy, I mean, those happy ones of the state of grace, and possessors as of the Paradise of this life.

C H A P. X.

Of his Corporal death.

Monsieur *de Renty* having now finished his mystical death, must now also look for to enter into the way of Glory, to receive that recompence of the reward which God had prepared for him in the Heavens, necessarily dye the death of the body, and so he did, 'tis this day that I writ this, two years ago, which fell out in that manner as I shall now relate.

On the 11th. of *April*, 1649. he found himself very ill and having concealed his sickness for five days, was constrained, immediately after a journey he had taken about some acts of Charity, to keep his bed; where he indured great pains all over his body, with which his spirit likewise was so much affected, that he professed his fancy to be so much disturbed with absurd and raving imaginations, that if God's grace had not assisted him, to understand the ground of them, and preserved him under them, he should have spoken more extravagancies than any mad man: that there was much therefore in such an evil, to desert an humble him; but it was the duty of a sinner to honour God in all conditions in which he should put him.

During these great pains and torments, both of body and mind, and during the whole course of his sickness, his ordinary employment consisted in affectionate elevations of his mind to God, in thoughts and words of blessing, praise, and submission to whatsoever was laid upon him, of meekness, and perfect obedience to all that attended, and had the care of him, with such an humble and contented spirit, that he thought all well done, though sometimes it was otherwise.

He expressed a wonderful patience, which ever gave a check to any complaint; still saying, that he suffered nothing, although his pains were extraordinary; And when his keeper; which was a Sister of the Hospital of Charity, with whom he had visited so many poor and sick folks, did importune him to declare his grief, O Sister (said he) how doth the love of God wipe away all pain? The servants of God suffer nothing. Another friend demanding of him, if his pain was not great? He answered, No. The other replied, That he thought it was. Its true, saith he, that I am much clogged with my disease; but I feel it not, because I do not think of it. Being urged by their sister to take some sweet things, he refused, saying; These conduce little either for life or death, and are not at all needfull

Yet he refused not Physick, though it was very bitter, which he took with a chearfull countenance, and swallowed it with great difficulty, without leaving any. The day before his death one told him of an excellent medicine, which had done great Cures. He answered, Patience is a soveraign remedy, intimating his unwillingness to try it; yet when it was brought, he took it without any reluctancy, or once asking

asking what it was, evidencing his mystical death to any thing that concerned him.

His sickness encreasing, and afflicting him very sore, yet he never call'd for any thing to refresh or relieve him; and when they had forced clean sheets upon his bed, and a pillow, which he had formerly rested with great confusion and humillity; he said, Lo, here lies a Gentleman at his ease.

Feeling some natural affection of joy arise in him, upon the sight of a person of his acquaintance, with whom he had held a strict correspondence in spiritual matters, who came out of the Countrey of purpose to visit him; he straightway suppress it, repeating these words three times over, with great fervour, *I desire nothing more but God*; which demonstrated clearly his perfect disengagement from all created things.

He commended to this parties care the millions (entreating him to labour earnestly in that business, as an employment by which God was much glorified, and the most profitable to the Church of any he knew) in these words :

Promise me Sir, that you will take pains therein, and promote them with all possible diligence : O Sir, it is a service well pleasing to God

Reflecting upon the poor (for whom he had always a most tender care) he said to his Lady;

I recommend the poor to you, will not you have a great care of them ? you will perform it better than I : Fear nothing, what you give to them, will not lessen the rest.

Most part of the first week, and some time also of the second, that he lay sick, were spent by him in works of mercy, appointing several Alms, and giving order for Letters to be writ into several Provinces about business of Charity; with which he stood charged, and whereof he gave an exact account,

Many persons of quality came to visit him, whom he received with much civility; but not without some trouble, by reason that most of those visits drew on discourse of worldly things and complements, of which he complained, saying,

They come hither to talk their Philosophy, of which I have no need.

And another time his expression was:

A Christian should talk little.

A Lady of great worth and piety, coming to visit him; said, Sir, I would with all my heart lay down my life to save yours. To whom he replied with a chearful look, and his eyes lifted up to Heaven;

To dye is not to be lost, our conversation and union will hereafter be more near and intimate.

But, Sir, said she, if God would restore your health, and continue you longer with us, do not you desire it? St. Martin desired to live upon these terms. He answered with much confusion:

O Madam there is no comparison betwixt a Saint and a sinner, the will of God be done.

The third day of his sickness, he desired that his Ghostly Father might be sent for: Whereupon they took occasion to demand of him, if he found himself much worse. He answered.

No, but that in a business of that consequence, and where the memory and judgment were so subject to decay, it were not safe to defer, for fear of a surprisal; and that it were very fitting to do that, which he had so often advised others unto, in the same condition.

The day after he made his confession, and then called for his Reliquary, that he might enter more particularly into a communion with all the Saints. The day after, he confest again, and almost every day till his death.

The Pastor of his Parish came to give him the Communion; and observing him after receiving, in a great silence, not speaking one word, but only with profound humility: saying,

My God, my God, pardon me, I am a great sinner.

He asked him the reason, why he spake so little, and did not apply himself to those that stood by, and were well pleased to hear him.

It is not fitting, saith he, to speak in the presence of the Word Incarnate, which I have received, nor take up any room in those hearts, which ought not to be filled, only with God.

But he added besides;

That his spirit was then applied to that joy, which a creature ought to have, to see it self upon the point of being re-united to his first Principle, and to its last end.

The same day after dinner, one told him it was fit to use some diversion from his serious thoughts, the Physicians judging his disease to have much of melancholly in it. To whom he replied, I never had any joy comparable to that I have felt this day. He ask'd him, upon what cause? To think, saith he, that I am going to be united with my God; repeating the words of the Apostle, *Cupio dissolvi & esse cum Christo;*
I desire

I desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ; and those also of the beloved Disciple, The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and he that thirsteth let him come: behold I come quickly, Amen. Come Lord Jesus: Yet resigning himself as well for Life as Death, unto the Will of God.

One day about Noon, he desired that his Chamber window might be set open, that he might behold the brightness of the day: which being done, he cryed out,

O bright day of Eternity! how this Sun-shine cheers me, helping me to meditate on that day, which shall never have night.

The more his Sickness and pain encreased, the more he strove to unite himself to God by Prayer, imitating his Heavenly Master, who in the strength of his Agony prayed the more earnestly: And when the violence of his disease oppressed him more, and he had need of greater straining to think upon God, he cryed out:

Courage, Courage, Eternity is at hand.

With many such like speeches, uttered with incredible fervour, but which could not be distinctly pronounced, by reason of the extream dryness of his throat, caused through the Fever; till at last, stopping his speech all on a sudden, he fixed his eyes stedfastly on Heaven for a quarter of an hour together, with a smiling look, and full of reverence, as if he saw some extraordinary sight: After which mustering up all his forces, he sat up in his bed, took off his cap, and holding it in his hand, he said, as it were ravished and overwhelmed with this contemplation, with great straining, and words half stifled in his throat, as well by the

the ardency of his spirit, as the weakness of his body;

I adore you, I adore you.

The Curate having administered to him Extream Unction at the time appointed; which he received with great devotion, answering to each prayer, and attending to what he said, and repeating them a good while after. He asked him, if he would give his blessing to his Children. He answered.

‘How so, good Sir, shall I presume to give a blessing in your presence? I should be happy to receive one from you.

But being urged thereunto, and told that the Church allowed that laudable custom, he lifted his hands and eyes up to heaven; saying,

‘I pray God give it to you, and may it please him to bless you, and to preserve you, by his grace, from the malignity of the world, that you may have no part therein; And above all, my Children, that you may live in the fear and love of God, and yield due obedience to your Mother.

On Saturday, which was the day of his Death, about half an hour past Ten in the forenoon, being newly recovered out of a violent fit of a Convulsion, which had like to have carried him away, looking attentively on those that were present, he made signs with his hands, head, and eyes, with a pleasant countenance, for a Person of Quality, and his intimate friend, to come near him; which being done, he spake thus to him:

Sir, I have one word to say to you before I dye (then pausing a little, to recover his strength, he testified his affection to him, but in words that could not distinctly be understood, at length raising his voice, and

and speaking more articularly and plainly, he proceeded) *The perfection of Christian life, is to be united unto God, in the faith of the Church: We ought not to entangle our selves in novelties; let us adore his conduct over us, and continue faithful to him unto the end; let us adhere to that one God, crucified for our Salvation; let us unite all our actions, and all that is in us, to his merits, hoping that if we continue faithful to him, by his grace, we shall be partakers of the glory of his Father. I hope we shall there see one another one day, which shall never have end.*

The party ready to reply, and give him thanks, Monsieur Renty stopped his mouth, laying,

Adieu, this is all I have to say to you, Pray for me

Some time after this, and a little before his death, fixing his eyes stedfastly upon Heaven, as if he had discovered something extraordinary; he said,

The Holy Infant Jesus, where is he?

Thereupon they brought him his Picture, which he kissed devoutly; and asking for his Crucifix, took it in his hands, and kissed it most affectionately. Then turning himself towards death, presently entred into his last agony, which held not above a quarter of an hour, of which he spent the most part in pronouncing the Holy Name of Jesus; making as well as he could acts of resignation, and commending his spirit to God; after which he expired sweetly, and his holy soul, as we have good cause to believe, departed to its place of rest.

Thus

Thus lived and dyed *Monsieur de Renty*, one of the most glorious lights that God hath bestowed upon his Church in this Age, and one of the greatest ornaments of true devotion that hath appeared this long time. He died at *Paris*, the 27 year of his Age, the 24 of *April*, 1649. about Noon, near the time of our Saviours elevation on the Cross, of which a certain person having a particular knowledge in his prayers, applied the merits of this passion to him at the instant of his death; in such sort, that this application, together with his own acts of resignation and annihilation which he had made, and with which he both honoured and embraced the Cross, are piously believed, to have perfectly purged his soul, and put it into a condition of entring into its beatitude and enjoyment of God at the instant of its dissolution.

There are reports of several Revelations and Visions concerning his state of glory, and how at the instant of his death, a Globe of light was seen ascending from Earth to Heaven. Certain miraculous Cures are also related to be done by his intercessions and spiritual relief, supernaturally afforded to several devout persons by his admonitions; which things will not seem incredible, when we consider his holy life, and heroick virtues, rendring him one of the miracles of our Age: Yet since I have not the like assurance of these, as of what I have already written, and that true Sanctity and Christian perfection consists not in such things, which are not at all imitable, I shall not insist upon them.

I only add by way of Conclusion, That we have great reason to admire the secret counsels of God, in taking out of the world a man so useful; who being in his full strength, and flower of his Age, and in such an eminent degree of credit, reputation; and capacity, might wonderfully have advanced the honour of God, and good of his Neighbour:

But when I say it was the hand of God, all things are therein concluded: And hereby he is pleased to let us know, that he hath no need of us for the advancing of his glory, and the execution of his designs, which he can bring about without us; and when he is pleased to make use of us his instruments therein, we are to behave our selves with great humility in his presence: He hath translated him to another place, where he glorifies his Majestie with greater perfection; to a place and state, that truly deserves the name of glory; and that not only in consideration of what the Saints receive, but of what they render to the King of glory. Moreover, we may affirm, that these holy men, great pillars of the Church, and comforts of the faithful, are frequently taken away before their time, as a just punishment upon us; for the little use and benefit we make of their conversation and example.

And truly when first I heard the news of his sickness, and the danger that he was in, I could not but make this reflection, that considering so solid and complete a virtue, notwithstanding that great need the world had of him, and the exceeding great good he might still have done in it, it was very likely he might dye, as being a fruit ripe for Heaven; even as fruit in its maturity is ready to be gathered;

gathered, and takes hurt, by being plucked too soon or too late. Thus did God gather this good man, in the maturity of his graces, and perfection of his virtues, as a man perfect and compleated, to place him in Heaven, there to receive his just reward, where he waits for us, to adore, and glorifie, and love, together with him, in all perfection God the Father, the Son, and H. Ghost, to whom be Honour, Praise, Benediction, and all sorts of Adoration and Service, now and for ever. Amen.

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THE
CONCLUSION
OF THE
WORK.

*How we ought to read the Lives of
Saints:*

TO conclude this work, and render it more useful to the Reader, I think it will not be amiss to afford him some instructions how to read the lives of Saints, and Histories of persons eminent in virtue; to the end, that that fruit may be reaped by them, for which they were compiled. These eminent souls then, are to be considered in several ways: 1. As they have relation to God. 2. As to our selves.

For the first, as they relate to God, it is certain, that these Saints, and Persons, famous for Piety, are the greatest Master-Pieces, the richest Ornaments, the most precious Jewels, the choicest Works, and the greatest Instruments of Gods Glory, that are upon Earth. For if the meanest righteous man

is incomparably more noble and honourable, than all sinners put together (since these are the very slaves of the Devil, and enemies of God, even the greatest Kings and Monarchs of the Universe (according to the estimate the truth it self makes of them) ignoble and infamous, whereas the other is a servant, friend, and child of God (whose service is perfect freedom) how much more honourable and glorious are the Saints, and the Persons of such heroick Vertue because they possess such justice and vertue in a more high degree, have a greater abundance of gifts and graces, partake more fully the perfections of God, are more lively Images of him, and enjoy a nearer alliance and resemblance with our Saviour Jesus Christ, and are his richest conquests, and his choicest workmanship.

Tertullian considering *Job*, in the thickest of his bad news, posting from all quarters, in the height of his afflictions, and most sensible pains, free from all impatience and murmuring, not opposing the least word, or repining thought against Gods sacred counsels, but continually blessing God for all, and looking upon him fallen from the height of happiness, upon his dunghill, where he lay stripped of all, but sores and scabs, spread from the crown of his head, to the sole of his foot, enduring all this extremity with invincible patience, he breaks forth into this expression, *Quale in illo viro feretrum Deus de Diabolo extruxit ! quale vexillum de inimico glorie sue extulit, cum ille homo ad omnem acerbum nuncium nihil ex ore promeret nisi Deo gratias !* What a Trophic hath God erected to his own honour, in the person of *Job*, by his patience, able to encounter the Devil !

Devil! what a Banner hath he set up, what a Victory hath he obtained by him; ever that enemy of his glory!

These words and considerations are applicable to all his Saints, of whom we may say, that they are the great procurers of his honour, and by their Faith, Hope, Charity, Patience, Fortitude, Humility, Obedience, Chastity, and other Vertues, like so many high-sounding Trumpets, do make the Earth echo with his praises.

We ought therefore to have a high esteem of all the Saints and persons of signal Vertue, we are obliged to a particular veneration of them, praising; and loving; and honouring them; and our Saviour Christ in them, and for them; for undoubtedly; *Mirabilis in Sanctis, Deus*, as David saith; God is most admirable, and to be praised; loved and feared in his Saints. We ought to admire his power in their miracles, the might of his grace in their heroick actions; we ought to hope in his mercy, on the consideration of those happy changes he wrought in them; and to fear his justice, when we consider those severe chastisements, which he inflicted upon their smallest faults; and love his bounty and goodness, in those demonstrations of his mercy and benignity which he hath shewed to them. Where it is to be observed, that as we are not to credit lightly all that is said or written of their Visions, Revelations and extraordinary Graces and favours which God hath bestowed on his Saints when not approved, and authorized by the judgment of his Church; because herein a man may easily be deceived, and the Devil, much craftier than we, knowing our curious and ambitious nature;

apt to be taken with sublime novelties, can disguise himself in several shapes, and be transformed, as saith *S. Paul*, into an Angel of light. So neither on the other side, ought we to be too incredulous or rash to condemn; since it is certain, that there ever have been, and ever will be true miracles; nor is it just for us to measure the power and goodness of God, by our reason, nor limit his bounty by the narrowness of our hearts.

Since the greater mysteries of the Incarnation, and of the *H. Eucharist*, together with what God hath wrought in the beginning, and continues working every day for man (whereof we can raise no doubt) there is nothing that can seem incredible in the graces and favours of God communicated to a soul, since nothing herein can be parallell'd with the former. Our Saviour testifies greater love to weak man, giving himself to him more miraculously, and in a more transcendent manner in one Communion, than he ever manifested to all his Saints, in those extraordinary Communications of his graces and favours to them.

Moreover, what bounty, what compassion and tenderness did he exercise towards men, whilst he lived amongst them! What did he not for them, in his Life; what did he not suffer for them at his Death, after his glorious Resurrection, when he was in a condition so far above them? what familiarity and intimacy did he shew to his Disciples, visiting them frequently, disguised in several shapes, appearing visibly to them, appointing several meetings with them, talking lovingly with them, suffering them to touch him, and eating with them: These familiarities are very wonderful, and withal very certain;

we

we may truly affirm, that the love of God to mankind, and particularly to pure and innocent souls, is unconceivable; *Cum simplicibus fermocinatio ejus*; His Secret is with the righteous. We see how Fathers, though never so grave and ancient, delight themselves in their Children, even often to play with them; insomuch, that that renowned great Captain and King of *Sparta*, *Ageilaus*, surprized by a friend, riding upon a stick with his little Son, and observing him astonished at the action; asked, Whether he had any Children: Who answered, No. Then said *Ageilaus*, wonder not at what I do; you must be a Father, to be capable of these tendernesses, and to come to these forgettings of your self.

We must not therefore think it strange, if God (who is truly a Father to mankind, and so far transcends in paternal affection all others, that in comparison of him, they deserve not the name of Fathers) hath such tender bowels, and amorous affections to the Saints who are his dearest Children; which he expressed often with unconceivable intimacies and caresses, that who so will judge of the reality of them, must first be possessed with the same love, that God bears in his eternal bosom, some glimpse whereof we may conceive, by considering the embraces, and kisses and welcomes that passed betwixt the Prodigal Son and his Father in the Gospel, *Luke 15. 20.*

Here therefore, according to the observation of the Ancients, *Ne quid nimis*; let there be nothing done too much, let there be neither too much facility, nor too much difficulty to believe what is said of the graces done by God to Holy souls: But let

us balance our selves equally between the one and the other, weighing and examining things in the scales of Divine Prudence, not of Human Reason. And thus much for the first consideration, as they relate to God.

Concerning the second, as they relate to us, Saint Gregory the Great, hath an excellent Note, *Homil. 34. in Evang.* where he saith, That God hath not lighted more Torchcs in the Heavens, to guide and direct our steps on Earth, than he hath set us here below, to conduct and shew us the way to him. Amongst these, the Saints are undoubtedly the most considerable, since there is not one amongst them, whose Life is not a bright shining light unto us, to discover the paths we are to walk in; and like that famous Watch-Tower *Pharos* in *Alexandria*, which by its fires and light, served to guide the Marriners in the Night, how safely to steer their Course.

The Saints saith *Gregory Nissen*, set forth their Lives to men, who direct their course towards God, like a bright Lamp, to conduct them securely. And

In vita S. Ephrem.

Τῆς ἡλιακῆς λαμπρο-
τέρας λαμπάδα, ὡς
ἀνιμνήν ἢ ζῶσαν.

Presat. in Job.

speaking of *S. Ephrem*. he calls him a great Luminary, who had more enlightened the World by his Life, than the Sun by his beams; and a little after saith, That God had fixed him as a stately living Pillar

(like the *Mercuries* of the Ancients, placed in Cross-ways to direct Passengers) to declare to men, the High-way to Sanctity and Perfection. *St. Gregory* the Great, advileth us, moreover, to consider, how that as God the Creator by an admirable Providence, a most beautiful Oeconomy, and profound Wisdom, hath so ordered the course and seasons of
Stars,

Stars, that every one keeps his time of rising and setting one after another, to enlighten the darkness of the Night, and cast their influences upon us: So in like manner he hath sent and disposed the Saints, like so many Stars, to give us Light in the Darkness of this Life. Accordingly (saith he) he hath appointed *Abel* to rise, to teach us Innocence: *Enoch*, Purity of Intention in our Actions; *Noah*, to fortify us with Courage, in expecting our long delayed hopes; *Abraham*, to set before us a model of an heroic obedience; and so of the rest. *Ecce quam fulgentes stellas* (as that holy Pope goes on) *in celo cernimus, ut inoffenso pede operis iter nostræ noctis ambulemus*; Behold what bright Stars bespangle the firmament of the Church, to guide our feet safely in the Night of our journey.

And admirable are the examples they have left us, and the influences of Vertue that these mysterious stars have conveyed to us, *Fuit in iis* (saith *S. Augustine*) *Continentia usque; tenuissimum victum, panis & aqua, & non quotidiana solum, sed etiam per plures dies perpetuata jejunia, Castitas usque; ad conjugii prolisque contemptum; patientia usque; ad crucis flammam usque; neglectus, liberalitas usque; ad patrimonia distributa pauperibus; denique; totius mundi aspernatio usque; ad desiderium mortis*; Their temperance was extended even to the most slender diet of bread and water, and to fast, not of a single day only, untill the evening, but continued for divers days together. Chastity, even to the contempt of Marriage and Progeny. Patience, to the slighting of Gibbets and Flames. Liberality, to the distributing of their whole Patrimonies to the poor. In fine, contempt of the whole world, even to the desiring of death.

And all this to instruct us, what we ought to do, *Sanctorum Vita* (as saith *S. Ambrose cap. 1. de S. Joseph*) *cæteris norma vivendi est*; The life of Saints is our rule, to order our lives after them.

Since then God hath given these for a rule to guide our Lives after; and for Beacons to direct us in our sailing towards Heaven, let us mark them attentively, and follow their steps in our journey thither.

To which undoubtedly we are obliged, because God demands and expects it from us; and also, we shall find it most profitable, in that this attentive observing what they did, is most likely to make the deepest impression upon our spirits. Whereupon *S. Anthony* (as *Athanasius* reports of him, in *his vita*) recommending earnestly to his Religious, the Lives of Saints, to fashion themselves to their model. And *S. Basil* writes in his first Epistle, that as young Painters, to make themselves skilful, look often upon the Pieces of curious and excellent Masters, spending whole hours and days in the copying of such Works; So they that would draw the Picture of Vertue in their Souls to the life, must diligently heed these most excellent Originals, by which they shall in time become, in some measure like unto them. He adds moreover, That as heat and light stream naturally from the Fire, and sweet scents exhale from perfumes; in like manner sacred Knowledge ariseth from the actions of Saints and the sweet odour of their virtues, perfume such as are much conversant in them.

And as it is not possible, that he that continues long in the Sun, should not receive some heat and light from it; and, he that makes some stay in the Perfumer's Shop, amongst Musk and Ambergreese, should not smell at all thereof; neither can such as
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have much commerce with Saints, and study their Vertues, remain without some amendment and favour of Holiness.

Those two renowned Courtiers, of the Emperour, which S. Austin mentions in his Confessions *lib. 2. cap. 6.* were so wrought upon, by reading the life of S. Anthony, that they presently took up a resolution to quit the world, and all other thoughts, save of their own salvation; *Legere cepit unus eorum* (these are his own words) & *mirari, & accendi, & inter legendum, meditari, arripere talem vitam, & relicta militia seculari, servire tibi; legebat & mutabatur intus, & exuebatur mundi mens ejus*: One of them began to read the life, and as he read, to admire, and his heart burning within him, conceived a resolution to imitate it, to throw off his sword, and the Emperours Service, to become a servant of God: Thus whilst he read he found his heart changed, and his soul to disentangle herself from the affections of the world, to put off the old man, to be clothed with the new.

And of himself he affirms, that the examples of these Holy servants of God, were like hot coals cast into the bosom of his soul, heating, and warming, and setting him all in a flame.

S. Columban oweth his conversion to the reading and the considering of the life of Mary of Egypt, our Founder S. Ignatius his, to the lives of several Saints, with innumerable others: S. Eugendus Abbot of *Clauze*, read continually the lives of S. Anthony, and S. Martin, and having them constantly before his eyes, and more within his heart, fashioned his own after them. Bonaventure, of S. Francis, that *Ex recordatione Sanctorum omnium, tanquam lapidum ignitorum in deicum recalescebat incendium*; when he found his heart wax cold in the love of God, he warmed
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and enkindled it by a frequent ruminating upon the Vertues of Saints, as so many red hot stones.

To this purpose the examples of Saints are serviceable unto us, and such benefit are we to extract from the reading of their Histories; and as they are our patterns for our imitation, so will they be witnesses against us at that great day, if we fail herein, and will sit then as Judges to condemn us. We may much more truly say of them, than *Seneca* said of that great Philosopher of his times, that he was given to that Age, *Ne aut exemplum deesset saeculo suo, aut convicium*: for the instruction or the reproach of those times.

For the Saints were like us, and we are like them, Men made of the same Mass, Children of the same Father, Servants of the same God; we have the same Commandments, the same Sacraments, the same Hope, the same Heaven before us. *Elias* (saith *S. James*) was a man subject to like Infirmities: The Saints had flesh and blood, as we have; subject to like passions, like weakneses, sensible of the same difficulties as we in resisting their appetites, vanquishing their Vicious Inclinations, practising of Vertue; yet notwithstanding, through the grace of God (which is never wanting to any) with good Courage and Resolution, broke through their Difficulties, achieved heroick Actions, though never so contrary to their own inclinations. We must think (saith *S. Ambrose* upon this subject, *l. de Joseph. c. 1.*) that the Saints *Non naturæ præstantioris fuerunt, sed observantiæ majoris, nec vitæ nesciverunt, sed emendarunt*; had not a more excellent nature than we, but a more exact care over it; were not exempted from the temptation of Vices, but circumspect to correct and avoid them: Therefore
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we must imitate them, because we are able, and if we neglect it, shall be held culpable.

S. *Austine* relates, that when he first began to consider of a conversion, he fell into mighty torments, and unspeakable anguish, especially upon the thoughts of quitting those delights which had bewitched him, and of living in Continence; and hereupon, *That Vertue presented herself before him, with a countenance full of Majesty and Sweetness, and inviting him with a pleasant Look, to draw near, opening her Friendly Arms to embrace him, which were filled with a number of persons, whose Example was sufficient to encourage and fortifie him: Here were young Men and Maidens, Men and Women of all Ages, vigorous Old People, and Maids grown ancient in Vertue: Then Chastity with a little disdainful smile; yet such a one as was proper to encourage him; said, Tu non poteris quod isti & istæ? an vero isti & istæ in semet ipsis possunt, ac non in domino Deo suo? Canst not thou do what those of both Sexes have performed? or can any of these perform this of themselves? or rather by the Lord their God?*

We may therefore do according to our degree and station, what the Saints have done in theirs, wherein if we fail, we shall be found guilty, and their deeds will condemn us, *Instaures* (saith *Job* to this purpose, according to S. *Gregories* interpretation) *testes tuas contra me, & multiplicas iram tuam adversum me;* 'Thou producest thy witnesses against me, which are thy 'Saints, because I neglected to imitate their virtues, 'and increasest thine Anger round about me. And in another place, *Respiciet homines & diort, & peccavi & vere deliqui;* the sinner beholdeth men, that is, the Saints, weak men like himself, who yet conquered their Infirmities, and went beyond themselves; and considering their Victories, accuseth himself, saying, I have

have done amiss, I have sinned, and I condemn my own Life, so lazy, imperfect, and vicious.

Hence it is, that S. Ju'e, and the Wiseman before him, tell us, That the Saints shall judge sinners, and condemn at the last day; because they shall then make it appear, that if with them, they had corresponded to that grace which was given them, and done their parts as they should, they should have been partakers with them in the same bliss, and therefore their destruction is wholly from themselves.

When we shall all stand before that great Tribunal, to receive our final doom (saith Prosper) what shall we do, or what will we answer? which way can we turn us; to the Saints, those friends of God, whose instructions we have refused, and whose lives we have not imitated? shall we excuse our selves by the corruption of our nature, and frailty, and infirmity of our flesh: *Sed excusationi reclamabunt omnium Sanctorum exempla, qui cum fragilitate carnis, in carne viventes, quod fecerunt utique fieri posse docuerunt: maxime quia nec ipsi peccato, sua virtute, sed domini miserantis auxilio, resistunt.* But the examples of the Saints will confute us, and render those excuses fruitless; who labouring under the same infirmities, and conquering them, demonstrated that what they did, we might have done, seeing neither did they such things by their own strength, but through that assistance they received from the goodness of a merciful God: what then shall we answer for our selves. if our Saviour shall say unto us, undoubtedly he will, *Si potuistis, quare non restitistis desiderijs peccatorum? si non potuistis, quare meum contra peccatum non quaesistis auxilium? aut vulnerati quare penitendo*

pœnitendo non adhibuistis vulneri vestro remedium? if you were able to resist sin, why was it not done? if you were not able, why did you not seek help from me? if you were wounded in the combat, why did ye not apply a remedy to your wound by true repentance? to which not having any thing to answer (saith the same Father) he will pronounce against us the sentence of Condemnation, and send us into everlasting Torments.

Let us therefore in the name of God, secure our selves from this danger; let us not flatter our selves, by saying, these things are high and impossible, untill we have first tryed some of them; let us up and be doing, every one of us according to our condition and measure of grace, imitating these Saints and great Servants of God; and in particular this, whose History we have here related, who in the flower of his Age, and of so noble descent and birth, tempted with all the advantages the World could afford, in a secular and married condition, having lived so Holy and Vertuous a Life, hath traced out to all sorts of People, most excellent Patterns of Vertue for their imitation; and likewise hath afforded a fit subject, if they do neglect it, for their just reproach.

F I N I S.